ACROSS / A17
NPA charges P250,000 for local bets

NEWS / A2
Kris-Noynoy show off and running

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Clottey belittles Pacquiao's punching power

WORLD / A29
Obama: Americans have lost faith in US government

RP's Sy, Tan in Forbes list led by Mexican

THE INMATES OF MALL MAGNATE Henry Sy ranked 281st and tobacco king Lucio Tan 582nd on a list of the world's billionaires, which was topped by a frugal Mexican who prefers to use paper notebooks rather than the computers he sells.

Mexico's telco tycoon Carlos Slim, the world's richest man, jumped past Americans Bill Gates and Warren Buffett to become the first person from a developing nation to top the list, according to Forbes magazine. The list has long been dominated by Americans and Europeans.

RP'S SY/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, March 12, 2010 ★★ Vol. 25 / No. 94

MMDA: Wear any color but yellow in meantime

By Mike Navales

THE BOSS OF THE METROpolitan Manila Development Authority is painting the town green—and that includes footbridges and arcades, the MMDA tracks

MMDA/ A20

GMA declares state of calamity in South

But fund use by LGUs for polls feared

By TJ Burgonio
in Manila
and Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

HERE'S GOOD NEWS and bad news.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has declared a state of calamity in Mindanao, a move that will allow cities, towns and provinces on the island to release 5 percent of their budgets so they can quickly procure generators to address the acute power shortage.

The total amount can easily run into billions of pesos, a possible source of kickbacks for officials running in the May elections, especially because the procurement process is exempted from bidding.

In Cagayan de Oro City, Mayor Constantino Jaraula said "although there is a chance for abuse," people should "assure

GMA DECLARES/ A20

BURNING BUSH The combination of intense heat brought about by El Niño and dry grass ignites Saturday night's bush fire in a section of the Ilogao-Bontoc Road in upland Barangay Talubin, 14 kilometers from Bontoc town proper in Mt. Province. (See related story in Across the Nation, Page A18.)

VOJO DANGUIS-PHILIPPINE

Palace lauds Verzosa; Noy fears he may be retired

By TJ Burgonio

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE Director General Jesus Verzosa yesterday drew praise from Malacañang for his declaration that he would not back any move to keep President Macapagal-Arroyo in power if the May elections failed.

Gary Olivar, a deputy spokesperson of Ms Arroyo, sought to put Verzosa's statement in context and said the latter meant that he "would not support any illegal action or decision by his counterpart in the Armed Forces."

"And I submit this is the proper attitude, anyway, that should be followed by the AFP and the police—not to follow any illegal orders or commit illegal actions," Olivar said at a briefing.

On the campaign trail, Liberal Party (LP) standard-bearer Sen. Benigno Aquino III said he did not trust Ms Arroyo or Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit to ensure a peaceful transition of power.

Aquino also said that compared to Bangit's, the career of Verzosa had had its ups and downs.

"If Verzosa will suddenly be booted out or retired early, one has to wonder what the reason is," he said, adding that the man was not due for retirement until December.

PALACE/ A20

No bail for 25 cops charged in Parañaque shoot-out

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) has ordered the filing of two counts of murder against 25 policemen involved in a 2008 shoot-out with suspected robbers in Parañaque City in which a 53-year-old senator and his 7-year-old daughter were killed.

State Prosecutor Susan Allan Mariano found probable cause to indict the lawmen for the death of Alfonso "Jun" de Vera and his daughter, Lia Alfuna, in the Parañaque Regional Trial Court.

Mariano's resolution was approved by Chief State Prosecutor Claro Arellano and Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon.

No bail was recommended for Supt. Jonathan Calleja, Chief Insp. Hermogenes Cabe, Senior Insp. Abraham Abapuri, Inspectors Erikson Rosanes and Ludivico Cordova, Police Officers 3 Hagar Torres, Jericho Oracley, Guilbert Lopez, Pelia Bust, Eugene Papat-cw and Policarpio Jose Jr., and Police Officers 1 James Yulong, Allan Apil, Efren Angcaan, Lloyd Belayangan, Nestanio Gano and Sherwin Maybunting.

All belong to the Philippine National Police Special Action Force (SAF).

NO BAIL/ A2

Comelec now says it can print 50M ballots

By Kristine L. Alave

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO—AGAIN.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) yesterday expressed confidence it would be able to print all 50 million ballots required for the automated elections on May 10.

Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal dismissed suggestions from the Comelec's own commissioner on ballot printing that the National Printing Office (NPO) would be unable to meet its printing schedules.

Larrazabal said a fifth printing machine was being acquired

COMELEC/ A22

DANGER SIGNS A soldier stands guard on a street lined with campaign posters in Aliaga. A series of killings since the Maguindanao massacre late last year has set the stage for violent elections, experts warn. AP

Analysts: Rise in killings portent of RP's most violent election yet

A SERIES OF KILLINGS SINCE the massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao province in November last year has set the stage for the country's most violent election in recent history, experts warn.

Politicians defying a government crackdown and running their own small armies are one of the key trends behind the political murders, according to independent monitors and officials trying to stem the bloodshed.

"There are just too many private armies, goons for hire and entrepreneurs of violence," said Rommel Banlaoi, executive director of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research.

"The government must urgently find ways to disarm armed groups and ensure they are not used for election-related purposes," Banlaoi added.

Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Verzosa underlined the government concern over campaign violence when he flew to Cotabato City yesterday and urged politicians to eschew the use of force in pursuing their political ambitions.

ANALYSTS/ A22

RP calls Burma's election a farce without Suu Kyi

RANGOON—A DECISION BY BURma's military junta to bar prodemocracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi from upcoming elections drew sharp criticism from around the world, with the Philippines calling it "a farce."

A new election law announced on Wednesday prohibits anyone convicted of a crime—as Suu Kyi was in August last year—from being a member of a political party. That makes the detained democracy leader ineligible to become a candidate in elections scheduled for some time later this year.

"Unless they release Aung San Suu Kyi and allow her and her party to participate in elections, it's a complete farce and, therefore, contrary to their roadmap to democracy," Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo told The Associated Press.

The Philippines is a partner with Burma, also called Myanmar, in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose 10 members rarely voice criticism of one another.

RP CALLS/ A22

CHOPPER HOP Presidential candidate Manny Villar arrives by helicopter for a campaign sortie at the University of Southern Mindanao in Kabacan, North Cotabato.

KRIS ACTUALLY Presidential candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III (right), his sister-TV host Kris and brother-in-law James Sauls the "Laban" sign as they campaign in Zamboanga City. (Story on Page A2)

Second FRONTPAGE

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Loren stands by claim Mar offered her a deal

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE Loren Legarda is standing by her claim that her closest rival, Sen. Manuel Roxas, had approached her with a deal to make her withdraw from the race.

Roxas has denied Legarda's allegations, saying she was "pushing all stunts" to protect her Nacionalista Party presidential running mate, Sen. Manny Villar.

Legarda yesterday reiterated the claim she made in a radio interview last Wednesday that Roxas had approached her in February with a proposal that his political advisers have since interpreted as an "exchange deal" offer for her to withdraw her candidacy.

Roxas, the vice-presidential running mate of Liberal Party (LP) standard-bearer Benigno Aquino III, leads Legarda by 17 points in the latest robo-pasbreak surveys.

Last Wednesday, Legarda revealed in interviews on dzBB radio that Roxas' supposed attempt to bribe her last February.

According to Legarda, as she passed by Roxas' desk in the Senate session hall, Roxas told her: "If (there's) any way that you can support any principal (Aquino) and me, if there's anything you want, we can provide."

At the time, when she had yet to find a presidential running mate, she said she did not know what Roxas meant exactly.

In a press conference in Tanjay City yesterday, Roxas again denied making an offer for Legarda to switch sides.

He said: "I asked her if she could support the Noy-Mar ticket because I could not believe that she was resistant in supporting Villar when he described as scarapt. Lacking in leadership qualities, always absent and (always) gives flaking (at Tradition) interests over the country. When she did not reply, that was the end of it."

In the latest Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey conducted from Feb. 24 to 28, Roxas obtained 34 percent against Legarda's 28 percent.

Legarda claimed that compared to Roxas, her ratings have been steadily improving, noting that Roxas' susceptibility to the voters had gone down by four percentage points since the last SWS survey in January.

She said the SWS survey was validated by the Manila Standard Today survey, conducted from Feb. 20 to 26, in which she got 30 percent against Roxas' 29 percent, with the latter leading by only 0 points.

Although still leading Legarda, this was a major decline for Roxas because in a Pulse Asia survey conducted from Feb. 21 to 25, Roxas had a huge lead over Legarda of 40 points, with 45 percent for him compared to Legarda's 27 percent.

Legarda said she was ahead of Roxas in the Class E socio-economic class, "because I am one of them. I and Senator Villar came from the grade of the poor, so we badly understand the plight of the poor."

Don't be fooled by clouds; it won't rain yet

THOUGH IT HAS BEEN CLOUDY IN RECENT days, the weather bureau says there is very little chance of rain.

Friday, according to forecaster Robert Sawi, temperatures may be expected to rise again on Friday when the clouds are expected to thin.

Sawi said the recent cloudy weather was because of the cold end of a cold front affecting Luzon. This frontal system is spreading some clouds over the region, especially the northern part of Luzon, he said.

"If it rains, it will only be brief showers," said Sawi of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

He said the reported brief rainshowers in Baguio and the Northern Luzon provinces were due to the cold front. "But these won't be strong and it will only be brief," he said.

A cold front is the point where cold air from the northern hemisphere and the warm winds of the equator meet.

"It's still going to be hot because the clouds are naturally trapping the heat from the sun. But this might be the last time we will be experiencing cloudy weather. We expect the hot weather to continue by Friday," he said.

Sawi expects the waterbirst, or the warm and humid eastern wind from the Pacific, to affect the Visayas in the next few days, with temperatures ranging from 34 and 35 Celsius.

In the Mindanao area, some brief rainshowers can be expected because of the big cloud formations, especially in the eastern sections of the region, he said.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country have lately been experiencing roasting temperatures, a result of the El Niño phenomenon, or the unusual warming of sea surface temperatures in the Pacific which brings hot weather and drought. Alexis Romero

Bangit 'mistah' now chief of Army

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A CLASSMATE OF newly appointed Armed Forces Chief Gen. Delfin Bangit is taking over as Army Commanding General, which Bangit formally relinquishes today.

The Department of National Defense confirmed that Alexo Muralla Command Chief Maj. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu has been chosen for the Army's top post.

Mapagu and Bangit both belong to the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1978, which has adopted President Macapagal-Arroyo as an honorary member.

Mapagu's best ex-mate senior officers still holding key positions in the military.

According to the records, there were senior officers eligible for the Army's top post, among them Eastern Mindanao commander (then) Maj. Gen. Raymundo Penaranda and Northern Luzon Command Maj. Gen. Ricardo David, who are both from the PMA Class 1977.

On the eve of the turnover rites at the Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio yesterday, rumors circulated about gambling among senior generals over the appointment of successor who is their junior.

Reached by phone yesterday, Retired Gen. Leopoldo Bataoil, the Class 1978 president, said he did some such "bets-mental" among his classmates.

"I can feel their sentiments and I am aware of their track record, but we remain professional and we respect and abide by the decision of the Commander in Chief," he said.

At last, he pointed out, the senior officers attended the ceremonies for Bangit at Camp Aguinaldo on Wednesday.

Bataoil noted that his class will hold key positions in the Armed Forces, with Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Nestor Mata being "the most senior."

Bangit took over the highest military post from Gen. Victor Ibrado on Wednesday when the latter reached the mandatory retirement age of 56.

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QC judge faces raps for finding Villarosa guilty

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) has ordered the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office to charge Judge Ma. Theresa de la Rosa-Yadao with "knowingly rendering unjust judgment" when she convicted former Occidental Mindoro Rep. Jose Villarosa for the murder in 2006 of brothers Winkel and Paul Quintero.

The DOJ directive dated March 1 was signed by assistant Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera. Yadao, presiding judge of the QC Regional Trial Court, may file a motion for reconsideration with Devanadera's successor, Alberto Agra.

Contacted by phone, Yadao said she had yet to receive a copy of the DOJ resolution and declined comment.

Devanadera, who said the Board "gross error" in Yadao's decision, reversed two resolutions dated Sept. 17, 2009 and Feb. 17, 2010 of State Prosecutors Jose Pedro Servet, acting on the petitions of QC relatives of the slain Quinteros.

In March 2006, Yadao sentenced Villarosa to three counts of murder for the slayings of Winkel and Paul Quintero, and Rolando Quintos.

The two brothers were gunned down by a group of men while attending a friend's birthday party on Nov. 15, 1997 in Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro.

The elder Quintero had accused Villarosa of masterminding the killings, which he described as politically motivated. He also said the murderers would have dismissed him as a fatal dispute involving the Quinteros that displaced the fairness of the 600-ha Golden Country Farms Inc. in Mamburao.

The decision turned out by Yadao also reminded Gumersindo Rodriguez, Ryan Hipolito, Jessie Lagman, Rolando Hidalgo, Mario Tobias, Ruben Balagtas and Gilbert Bonifacio, *Ayesha Arnaiz, Julie Aurelio and Inquirer Research*

6 cops in Maguindanao massacre seek review

SIX POLICEMEN WHO HAVE been charged for the Ampatuan massacre are asking a Quezon City court to *first determine if there's* a probable cause for them to be indicted for the multiple murders.

In an omnibus motion filed on March 5, the six police officers—Senior Supt. Abdul Gapor Abad, Michael Mastersgan, Rasid Aaron, Abner Reyes and Mohamad Diliding—asked for a review of their case by Judge Aurelio Trampe.

Saying that they had already given testimony during the police investigation and that they were no evidence of their participation in the massacre, they asked that their names be excluded from the list of respondents.

The six policemen were among the more than 100 charged for the murder of 57 people on Nov. 23, 2009 in Ampatuan, Maguindanao. Those also charged were Datu Unsay Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr., his police support, earlier entered pleas of not guilty to 56 counts of murder.

In their omnibus motion, the policemen asked the court to withhold the issuance of an arrest warrant against them.

Julie M. Aurelio

Binay: I'm ready to take over from Erap

Erap mum on offer to withdraw

By Marvin Bordadora

SAGAY, CAMARINES SUR—PAWIKAING Binasog Pilipino vice presidential candidate Mayor Jejomar Binay said Thursday he'll be ready to take over as the vessel both he and ex-President Joseph Estrada vote and force disciple to out there for six-year term.

Estrada has said he'll be willing to step over the office to the vice president if he manages to finish his programs of government before the end of his six-year term.

"I originally declared to run for president," said Binay in response to a question covering the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino convention here.

"When I was mayor of Makati, I was able to preserve billions of pesos and millions of people were under my care. The only difference is the president is in charge of the whole Philippines," he said.

"Mentoring aside, I'm very qualified," he added.

Binay said voters should pick a vice president the way they would a president.

'Not a spare tire'

"Let us remove the mentality that the vice president is a spare tire. I hope we don't go back to the situation where, if the one runs-in or muffles, the vice president needs to become president the people would hesitate because . . . the vice president is not qualified," Binay said.

He said a president's job requirements are severe, just like a runner's. Binay has, ostensibly, come up third in vice presidential surveys, with erstwhile bet and Sen. Mar Roxas and Sen. Loren Legarda.

Erap mum on offer to withdraw

SAGAY, CAMARINES SUR—President Joseph Estrada on Thursday opted to continue keeping mum on the identity of the fellow presidentiable who supposedly offered to withdraw him his campaign expenses in exchange for withdrawing from the race and supporting the candidate.

"That's a bill order," said Estrada in reporters covering his campaign.

Estrada said now was not the time to make the revelation and that he would best to think it over two times before doing so. He added that he cannot conduct his campaign "on a high level."

"They can always deny it. If there's no room for deniability, then I will say it," he said.

Estrada was asked the question after Sen. Rodolfo Madrigal revealed on Wednesday that a rich ex-candidate had offered his P1 billion to withdraw from the presidential race.

Earlier, Sen. Richard Gordon, another presidential candidate, said he was approached by an emissary of the secretary Barry ousted Gloria Mrs. Manny Villar with an offer of a Cabinet post and reimbursement of campaign expenses to withdraw.

Estrada was the last to reveal an offer but he has remained the most steadfast in keeping the identity of the candidate to himself.

Only Villar among the presidential candidates has a declared net worth of more than P1 million.

Yesterday, Estrada did not want his briefing with reporters to end after learning that he was the most covered presidential candidate on the run news networks and the government news media.

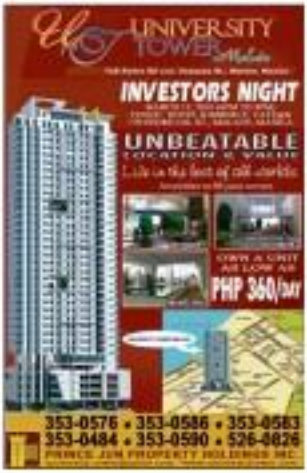
"I'm still enjoying [this]," he told his spokesperson. However, Estrada after he reminded him that it was time to move on to the next stop.

Concurrent for Rep. Amelito Fuentebella, who hosted the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino ticket in his residence here, Estrada reminded Estrada that it was time to continue with the motorcade.

"That's easy enough," said Estrada after learning of the Comelec for Media's Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) findings from from July 9 to 25, he had received the most airtime on the primetime networks of ABS-CBN, GMA 7 and TV5.

"I always try my best to endear myself to the media," he told the reporters.

The media can't be fair, cooks or break.



NEGLECTED SECTOR

Creation of bureau for special kids urged

By Philip C. Tubeza

WITH ONE TWO PERCENT OF FILIPINO children with special needs getting government support, the Department of Education (DepEd) is pushing for the creation of a Bureau of Special Education (BSE) to attend to their needs, outgoing Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said yesterday.

Lapus said the proposed Bureau would help cater for children with special needs (CSN) but young persons with disabilities (PWD), pointing out that in other countries they received "100-percent state support."

"We believe the creation of a specific unit to take care of the unique needs of special children is urgent," said Lapus in a statement.

He said that while CSNs and PWDs comprised 1 percent, they remained a significant part of the children's population.

Gifted children

Based on school year 2004-2005 statistics, there were 3.49 million CSPs in the Philippines, or 12 percent of the children's population. Other number, or estimated 4.2 million were PWDs while 1.27 million were gifted children," Lapus said.

Only around 11,000 of these children were enrolled in school year 2004-2005, however. But the number represented an 80-percent increase since school year 1999-1996 when enrollment was only around 8,000, he said.

To improve the situation, Lapus said he supported Senate Bill No. 2020, which mandates the creation of at least one special education (spec) center in each school division (one for each of the 17 regions) and up to three centers in fleeting school divisions.

He asked Malacañang to certify the bill as urgent.

The Senate bill has been approved on second reading, while its counterpart in the House of Representatives has been approved on third reading.

"Most people have yet yet recognized that persons CSDs or PWDs have very distinct talents and skills. And their integration and mainstreaming into society will contribute significantly to national development," Lapus said.

Defining special kids

Children with special needs are those who have autism, have other mental problems, are visually or hearing-impaired, are orthopedically or physically handicapped, learning disabled, speech-defective, have behavior problems, and those children that encounter health problems under the formal educational system.

"All CSDs, irrespective of the degree of sensory, physical or intellectual disability or needs, will have the opportunity to be schooled in the most educationally enhancing environment available with the provision of a quality education that best meets their needs," the Senate bill reads.

Under the proposed law, special day care centers will be put up near existing lying centers with the support of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The bill provides for special instructional materials which may be transcribed into Braille, large-type print or audio tape without having to pay royalties or royalties.

The bill also allows private institutions participating in the programs to avail of tax breaks and loans, technological and scientific assistance.

It provides for a P900-million yearly budget for five years for the Sped program, while a separate P20 million yearly from the President's Social Fund and the Philippine Gaming Corp. will finance the construction and operation of the BSE.

Ailing Pinoy sailor rescued from vessel off Taiwan

By Jerome Aning

THE MANILA ECONOMIC AND Cultural Office (Mecu) yesterday thanked the Taiwanese air force for helping in the rescue of a Filipino seaman who was feared to have suffered a heart attack on a Hong Kong-registered freighter that was plying the waters of southern Taiwan last month.

The M/V Ravenstrass was in the waters off southern Taiwan when its second engineer, Rolet Pernito Jr., 48, suddenly collapsed and complained of severe back pain and paralysis while carrying tools and implements.

The ship's captain, Seung Kunsoul had a heart attack, radioed Taiwan authorities for emergency medical assistance and the Taiwanese air force and the Chinese Airlines Seagull Service Team.

Mecu resident representative Antonio Basilio, in a statement, said the rescue team parachuted a "floating" night time operation in which Pernito fell.

The rescuee was brought to the Kaohsiung Veterans Hospital for treatment. He was diagnosed with a fractured back. He was discharged after his condition stabilized and was assisted by Mecu in traveling back to the Philippines on March 2 for further medical treatment.

In his letter to Gen. Lei Yu-chi, commanding general of the Taiwan Air Force Command Headquarters, Basilio said the rescue team's timely response proved crucial.

"Your immediate response to send a helicopter to assist Mr. Pernito from the vessel saved his life and prevented further damage to his body," Basilio wrote.

The vessel, which was travelling near the town of Hengchun in southern Taiwan, was en route from Nagoya, Japan to Singapore for bunkering when the incident took place.

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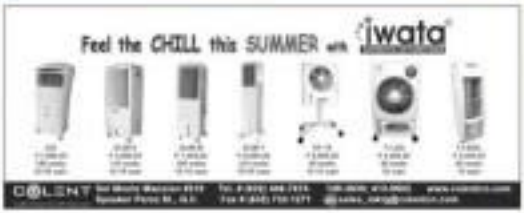

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Keep off politics, priests told

THE TOP CATHOLIC PRELATE IN THE country yesterday reminded the religious to refrain from endorsing candidates in the May 10 elections.

In a circular, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president Bishop Odilo Pedro said priests and bishops must strictly avoid getting involved in politics as taught by the Church.

Ordchiman's statement came after an archbishop and bishops endorsed the Ang Kapatiran party and its presidential candidate JC de los Reyes.

The prelates said that De los Reyes, whom they consider the Catholic Church's position on key issues on values, was an "intelligent" choice.

"The Church must refrain from partisan politics, avoiding especially the use of the pulpit for particular purposes, to avoid division among the flock they shepherd," said Ordchiman, the bishop of Tandag City.

Ordchiman said the clergy should focus on teaching moral principles and issuing moral guidelines on political activities.

"It must be admitted though that sometimes even teaching moral principles is actually interpreted by some as partisan political because of actual circumstances; nonetheless, we have to transmit with it," he said.

"In case a member or leader of such association decides otherwise, and becomes a candidate or openly campaigns for a candidate or party, he or she has to resign temporarily" he said.

The endorsement of Ang Kapatiran by senior CBCP prelates came as a surprise as the influential group had refused to endorse candidates in the past, preferring to issue criteria for the faithful to follow in choosing whom to vote for.

Members of the laity, on the other hand, have been encouraged to engage in politics and participate in elections.

— Marvin C. Sy

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CHECKING OUT THE MERCHANDISE Independent presidential candidate Bro. Jacinto Madrigal inspects the boxes of ballots ready for delivery at the National Printing Office in Quezon City. Titan's Smartmatic's Cesar Flores in the background.

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Gibo camp says he's moving up, slowly but surely

SLOWLY BUT SURELY GAINING ground, opposition presidential candidate Gilberto "Gibo" Teodoro Jr. is moving up in the ratings and a "strong surge" in the latter half of the campaign for the May elections is possible, according to the head of polling outfit.

Prof. Alfredo Pascual Jr., head of the survey group Synergeia, said Gibo's "slow, but sure" campaign strategy seems to be paying off, noting the former defense secretary's growing conversion influence across all sectors.

He also cited the possibility of a strong surge in the ratings when the local election campaign period starts in March and the advantage of the Lakas-Kampi-CMD political machinery kicks in.

In a briefing in Makati City this week, Pascual said Teodoro continued to gain ground in the presidential campaign, climbing in the poll survey's latest reading poll, from a mere 4 percent to 13 percent.

The independent survey group, in partnership with the news daily Business Mirror, released its latest nationwide survey of 1,500 voters from Feb. 10-16 to March 2, showing the ratings of Gibo and the other contenders in the May 10 presidential race.

TEODORO

blackjuice.com

Understandable

"Secretary Teodoro's fourth ranking at this point, is understandable, given that he came late into the race," Synergeia told reporters during a press conference at the Business Mirror office in Makati City.

Another survey, commissioned by foreign-based companies in the country, has placed Teodoro second with a double-digit score, ahead of the usual survey frontrunner Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, according to the administration party.

The party said that based on the Genyspeia and Images Group survey, Teodoro posted a 24-percent score, placing second to Nacionalista Party's Sen. Manuel Villar's 31 percent.

Aquino of the Liberal Party scored 20 percent with former president Joseph Estrada lagging behind at 13 percent.

The survey which ended on March 7, was conducted with more than 3,000 respondents across the country. Genyspeia and Images Group was commissioned by US- and UK-based companies in the country to perform the poll survey.

"Teodoro will continue to surge. We believe the local economy will provide another 10 to 15 percent," said Mike Toledo, Teodoro's campaign spokesperson in a statement yesterday.

He stressed that the survey was conducted on a larger sample, three times more than the usual 1,500 respondents of largely popular pre-election surveys.—Pinky Aun said the Social Weather Stations—whose results always ranked Teodoro's rank/place.

Nevertheless, the administration camp urged voters not to let survey results influence their choice for the next president and instead focus on the candidate's qualifications and capability to lead the country.

Losers' mentality

Hailed by the results of the independent survey, Teodoro yesterday said voters should also junk the "losers' mentality" where voters opt to give their ballots to another candidate because their choice was poorly faring in poll surveys.

Sources said other candidates had been preparing for this elections as early as two years ago. "But as voters, particularly the youth—though not limited to them—get a chance to hear the former defense secretary speak, combined with his party's strong political machinery whose influence may kick in after the local campaign period starts in March, I wouldn't discount him from making this a tighter race," he said.

Toledo said: "The results of this survey and Professor Pascual's insightful observations confirm that we're on the right track with regard to our Gibo's campaign strategy. The youth vote and the ruling party's campaign machinery—these are Gibo's 'secret weapons,' and we intend to use them to the hilt to guarantee his electoral victory come May 10."

— Jocelyn R. Uy

Search for outstanding women for 2010 is on

THE SEARCH FOR THE 2010 Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service is now open for nomination, the Tomas Fondacion announced.

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More information about the 2010 Tomas Awards are available at its website http://www.tomas.org.ph or at its e-mail address, tomas2010@gmail.com.

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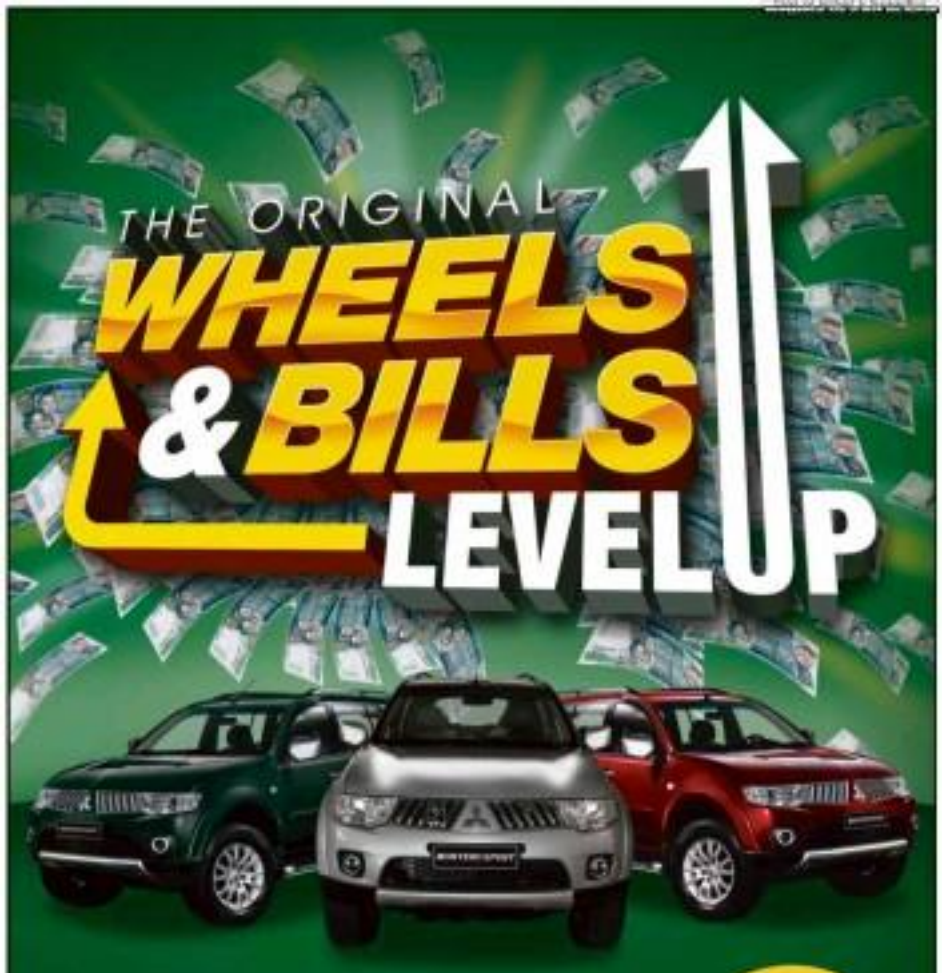

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OPINION

The last 'rigodon'?

EDITORIAL

THE GOOD NEWS IS, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has appointed old hands as the new Cabinet and sub-Cabinet vacancies. With less than four months left in her term, this is the approach that best guarantees continuity in policy and best prepares the agencies of the executive branch for a transition. The bad news is, some of the old hands do not strike us as transitional figures at all.

It is a step down from his previous post as trade and industry secretary, but Peter Favila's appointment to the policy-making Monetary Board seems a sensible choice. It would have been better for Jesli Lapus, now Favila's successor at the Department of Trade and Industry, to have stayed on at the Department of Education, but we can understand why the President placed the former business executive at the DTI. The promotion of undersecretaries Bernie Fondevilla and Joaquin Lagunera to the helm of the Departments of Agriculture and the Department of Budget and Management, respectively, is also welcome. Indeed, Lagunera's appointment soothes the anxiety of those who believed early reports that the President was going to name herself budget secretary, which would have certainly inflamed political passions.

The appointment of Mindanao's own Jesus Dureza, as the first chief of the newly established Mindanao Development Authority or Minda, seems both inevitable and sound. And the designation of Ricardo Saludo, formerly chairman of the Civil Service Commission and Cabinet secretary, as chief spokesman for the President and the administration's-explainer-in-chief in its last months, represents the wise use of available resources.

But we came with concern that Undersecretary Gary Olivar remains a deputy spokesman of the President's. Since his dual citizenship became public, Olivar should have had the strength of character and the sense of honor to resign, gracefully, from public service. (Or to have renounced his second citizenship.) Indeed, it was inconceivable that the administration to favor Olivar's exit, instead, we have a continuing reminder that, where it thinks it can get away with a crime, the Arroyo administration can be counted upon to violate the law with blithe contempt.

(We will also continue to suffer from Olivar's insult-to-the-intelligence interpretations of Malacañang reality. The other day, he said that judging from the "smiling" faces and "good spirits" of the Cabinet members captured in pictures of the oath-taking, the Cabinet and President Arroyo were racing to "finish the administration with a bang." Or, you know, they could have simply been posing for a photographer.)

Above all, we note that the President has promoted Leandro Mendoza to executive secretary. While Mendoza is a decent man, pleasant and congenial to everyone, he also burdens the office of executive secretary with the weight of his military background and his blind loyalty to President Arroyo. The true weight of that loyalty can be measured in his pleasant, congenial stonewalling of the Senate in the NBN-ZTE case.

A member of the President's inner circle, Mendoza, by assuming the pivotal post of "Little President," reminds the public of the cliquish, non-transparent, even secretive, nature of this administration: its successful attempts to head off impeachment complaints in the House of Representatives, its calibrated response to empty the streets of protesters, its scandalous refusal to be held accountable through its abuse of executive privilege.

A police general when the President assumed office in 2001, Mendoza, by assuming the pivotal post of "Little President," reminds the public of the assumed number of its generals in the official family. (In point of fact, Mendoza succeeds another graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, Eduardo Ermita.)

To be sure, Mendoza has told reporters that Malacañang is keen on "prevailing a very orderly transition from this administration to the next." Like Olivar, however, he hardly seems like the transitional figure this time of transition needs.

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Gov't lost P300M in new land deal

OFFICIALS OF THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION seem to be very busy providing for their future as the administration winds down in its last few days. Government assets are being sold at bargain prices in a hasty, no doubt to beat the elections, after which they would all be tainted sin. Can you blame them if they try to equip themselves with golden parachutes for when they have to jump out, or be pushed out of a vehicle spinning down toward oblivion?

The latest scandal you will hear for the next few weeks is the sale, at a bargain price, of a piece of government land in Manila to a private corporation.

The Home Guaranty Corp. (HGC) sold a 2.8-hectare parcel of Barbosa Gotamco Estate Milling Corp. for only P115,000 per square meter. Adjoining lots are now priced at an average of P20,000 per sq m. The sale was "grossly disadvantageous to the government," said Arturo Cañlas who filed an anti-graft case against Ronaldo Benjamin Bongolan, president of HGC and six other top officials of the government corporation.

The government may have already lost P300 million in the deal, Lasis alleged.

At the time of the sale in July 2008, the parcels was worth between P500,205,000 and P694,224,000 based on purchase prices as of 1999 and 2000, current sale offers and an independent appraisal of market values of adjacent properties, Cañlas said in his complaint.

He added that in 1999, the Philippine National Bank sold for P12,000 per sq m (or 2, Block 1 which is adjoining the properties sold by HGC (Lots 1 and 4 of Block 1 of Barbosa Gotamco) to Barangay Vera Tondo, Manila.

In August 2001, the National Housing Authority sold another adjoining property for P17,000 per sq m.

"Note that the above transactions occurred eight or 10 years prior to the sale of the HGC properties on July 28, 2008," Cañlas said.

He added that on July 23, 2009, Filinvest Bank offered to sell another adjoining property for P30,000 per sq m.

Also, Hydee Pua, a professional property consultant firm, in its appraisal report of July 2008, placed the fair market value of adjoining lots at Barbosa Castles at P24,000 per sq m as of June 2008. Based on that appraisal, HGC should have sold the property for at least P600 million, Cañlas said.

But that same month, HGC sold the land for only P115 million per sq m for a total sale price of P694,774,000.

"The difference between the fair market value of the subject properties and the actual purchase price is from P113,489,500 to P509,598,000. In other words, the government lost from P321,200,000 to P580,808,000 in the deal," the complaint said.

Real estate people also pointed out that since the Manila Barbosa Center is now being developed as a major commercial and industrial area, the property could easily fetch a P10,000 per square meter price, they said.

Clearly, the deal signed by HGC officials was "grossly disadvantageous to the government," said Cañlas.

The Office of the Ombudsman is now investigating the deal. We believed the acting HGC officials to explain their participation in the deal. It said it has found "enough basis to proceed with the preliminary investigation" of the graft charges as well as with the "administrative investigation" of the case.

It is a big grounder on HGC and the subject properties.

In March 1994, the National Housing Authority (NHA) and K-II Builders entered into a joint venture agreement (JVA) to develop the Sunday Mountain garbage dump in Antipolo City as a residential and industrial area. Under the JVA, K-II would finance the development of the Sunday Mountain site by constructing temporary and permanent housing units, and preparing the economical and industrial sites.

To secure more funds for the project, the NHA and K-II agreed to create an asset pool to which they placed their respective interests and rights in property substantially for the NHA, of tracts of real estate within the Sunday Mountain area and reclaimed land, and for K-II, the investments it had made as project developer. The 2.8-hectare property in question is part of the latter pool.

The asset pool then became the asset backing when they issued investors-roaming asset participation certificates (APCs) to investors. The securitization scheme was embodied in a trust agreement signed by Sunday Mountain Real Estate Trust Agreement. The parties to the agreement were the NHA, K-II, HGC as guarantor, and the Philippine National Bank (later on Planters Development Bank) as trustee.

When the certificates matured in October 2002, Planters, which halted funds, asked HGC to pay for the matching certificates. Subsequently, Planters executed a deed of assignment and conveyance covering the entire asset pool (in favor of HGC, which enabled the latter to acquire possession of the asset pool properties, including the 2.8 hectare lot.

When K-II learned that HGC was selling some of the properties that formed the asset pool, it knew that it and will deplete its interest in the development, it sought—and was granted—an injunction prohibiting HGC from disposing of any property in the asset pool.

The injunction was upheld by the Court of Appeals, and became final and executory.

Despite the injunction, however, HGC still sold the 2.8 hectare parcel to La Paz Milling Corp. in July 2008.

K-II filed a case for indirect contempt against HGC and La Paz with prayer to void the sale and subsequent sorts of the 2.8 hectare property to the latter point.

Conduct of P. II filed criminal and administrative charges in the Office of the Ombudsman against Bongolan and six other top officials of HGC.

Education: Elite vs democratic approaches

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

IF YOU MARVEL AT ATHLETIC FEATS IN THE Olympics or Asian Games, you might instinctively think of the specialized training of elite athletes. It is easy to forget that great athletes first learned to be agonized and humiliated, but this you need to widen the pool from which you are screening, and that is what a fully functioning public school system can do. If you recruit from a narrow group of, say, the urban and the wealthy, you exclude the rural youth raised in farming and fishing villages whose measles probably had the full benefit of fresh air, unprocessed food and manual labor.

The same thing with education in general. While it is important to promote quality in our science high schools, I also wonder if the basic Filipino Erasmus might have never even thought of graduating from high school. Are those countries in the lead by systematically excluding a large part of their population from being tournaments at all, and then confining our elites in a limited range.

We have already tried many solutions, and it's about time we tried fresh approaches. For instance, we frequently encounter budget deficits for public schools in the 1987 Constitution. "The state shall assign the highest budgetary priority to education..." To have it is that ruling by the Supreme Court that the budget deficit for debt servicing, while allocating only some P180 billion for education? This is contrary to a 1991 Supreme Court decision that nullified the automatic appropriation of debt payments prior to its being budgeted by Congress (Gonzales v. Comelec).

Given those continuing money constraints, the government must partner with the private sector in helping public schools. I recall that some time ago, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus, Gonzalo and Undersecretary Dindo Manhit began the Adopt-A-School Program, which is now institutionalized in a law, Republic Act 9523, the Adopt-A-School Act of 1998. Here the law provides for the government's leading corporations and philanthropists have offered, and their adopted schools, environmental infrastructure, facilities, training support for teachers, computers and lab equipment, as well as meal supplements.

The challenge today is to broaden the reach of the program. Enlist every Rotary Club and other civic organization, every professional guild, and the moneyed interests and Filipinos expatriates. Devise corporate social responsibility to schools, so that their generosity will have a multiplier effect. A child who regularly goes to school each day can establish the conditions of family life for the struggling Filipino family. For parents who have irregular jobs, having at least one family member doing anything thing and following a normal life should lead to a series of inspirations.

Second, instead of distributing all governmental money into public schools, and then trying to improve the admittedly dysfunctional public school system, we must consider transforming the government subsidy into a system voucher that parents can use to enroll their children in private schools. The voucher system has been used widely abroad, and I realize the practical complications can be daunting. To start with, private school systems will always cost more than the voucher, and if parents will have to shoulder the shortfall, we merely reintroduce the social divide into a supposedly egalitarian program. The voucher system will have to be combined with other subsidies—like those in the Adopt-A-School Program—in order to work.

Finally, we must use to the fullest the one resource that government has, namely, ownership of land. There was a time I would have been willing to propose the conversion of public land into practical uses, preferring the more romantic visions of wide open spaces. But like indeed to practice, so why waste the lives of the poor children cramped in tiny rooms? Why punish them while land lies idle? And worse, why force the endless open innocent children while so much government land has been sealed or misused?

Conversely, by setting up schools in erstwhile underdeveloped areas, are push businessmen to invest in the area, possibly ease from the government, and generate income for the schools. In other words, once we have failed to allocate the biggest chunk of the budget for education, let us find market sustainable ways to support our public schools.

Let us not squander too much about basic details. How do we design a full system that is abroad in answer to foreign questions in a hidden subsidy by a poor country for rich countries. They enjoy the full benefits from 20 years of education and training for which they didn't spend a centavo in total. They harvest from other people's labors.

But look at the other side. When these doctors and nurses and entertainers hurt home to the form of hard currency, we can see it as a subsidy made possible by the world capitalist institutions and families abroad, transferring their luxuries to the disheveled institutions and corrupted markets in the Philippines. In other words, I'd rather see the remittances as part of the international division of labor, rather than performed abroad. The same work, say, one medical consultation by a patient, would have cost P500 if performed in Manila, but P5,000 abroad, say, 6,000 if performed abroad.

For students from poor, struggling families, education is their last best hope to move up the social ladder and upgrade their standard of living. We cannot claim to be a real democracy unless we build the conditions—and ensuring the values—for real democracy to function, we need a sure of citizens who value their vote because they in turn is at stake, but that we must secure them, that they do have a future to think of—and that is what education gives them. Education is not just about teaching lessons. It is about giving hope.

• • •

Comments to pasanol@yahoo.com

The Middle East's hair trigger

THE NEW...ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST, A DOG...ner conventional wisdom is taking hold: war is unavoidable. Some see war as a way of resolving (a misnomer) deadlocked situations, shaking up a dysfunctional regional order whose static forces are not only at loggerheads, but are also incapable of resolving the legitimacy deficits of their respective regimes.

A volley of incendiary remarks between Israel and both Syria and Hezbollah has fueled anxieties about the possibility of war on Israel's northern border. The kind of anxieties is rarer than the Israeli leaders are known for. Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and Israel's most dedicated supporters in the United States are unanimous in their belief that Israel's Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon's call to turn peace organizations privately in order to prevent "an all-out regional war."

Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, for the first time explicitly warned the Israelis that a new round of conflict would no longer be confined to an Israeli-Lebanese showdown, but would involve the entire regional "axis of resistance" (Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas) to the east. In the case if Israel succeeded in its Syrian ally's wholesale drive for regional hegemony, or sanctions were abandoned in favor of nuclear arms.

Israel will most likely heed to Ahmed Nasrallah's and consider a preemptive attack on Iran only after all diplomatic means have been exhausted, and after whatever assertions are agreed upon fail to (or don't fully) match toward preventing the North Koreanization of Iran (the international tolerance of nuclear) behavior seems to the eyes of an isolated and restive, it has always aspired to later its military actions on grounds that can be justified.

This would seem to be particularly true when a confrontation with Iran's nuclear facilities begins. Israel would let his like to be seen as the spoiler of a diplomatic solution to a dispute that in any case cannot be resolved by military means alone.

Why in the Middle East, it should be recalled, have successful efforts always the parties did not really want them. The 1967 war is one example. Today's anxieties, too, are fed by perceptions and fears, by wishful imaginal concerns. The Iranian challenge to Israel's strategic hegemony is presented as a "threat to the Israeli national existence," and Israel's ruler reminders...) Hezbollah, which believes that it can bring about "the end of the Zionist entity," and Syria, which publicly boasts of its ballistic missiles' capacity to destroy Israel's main urban centers—are similarly viewed as existential anxiety.

A century ago between Israel and Iran has been going on for some time now. The normalization, allegedly by Israel, of Israel Shapiro's, dashed into Hezbollah's dust and Iran's chemically in development, two years ago, and more recently of Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah, Hamas' Islamic effort with the Al-Quds Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, suggest that an unplanned chain of events could trigger a real war.

The Lebanese front may ignite if Hezbollah seeks to avenge Mughniyeh's death, or simply as a reminder of a time when it was a force to reckon, as in 2006. If Iran and Syria then decide to back Hezbollah, a direct Israeli-Iranian showdown could follow. If an Israel planned as a preemptive attack on Iran might then be presented as an act of self-defense.

Gen. Julian Jones, President Obama's national security adviser, recently put forward a different, albeit equally ominous, prediction. Iran's response to the mounting international pressure might be, he said, to "lash out" at Israel through its proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas. Such attacks might trigger a wider regional conflagration.

War theories in the Middle East should never be dismissed as fanciful. Prophecies of war, misconceptions and misperceptions have the potential to be self-fulfilling. But America's recent history of wars in Iraq in Israel might not be enough to avert a calamity. The days of Pax Americana in the region are over, which means that avoiding a regional conflagration will require leadership of the major Israeli national security and the Israeli-Palestinian solutions for the Arab-Israeli conflict, and for Iran's quest to become a legitimate partner in a new regional system.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, a former Israeli foreign minister, also serves as vice president of the Madrid-based Centro for Peace, is the author of "Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy."

WORLD VIEW

Shlomo Ben-Ami

Measles: Not ordinary, not common

IN MY TIME, A PERIOD THAT COVERS MY childhood and the years when my children were elementary school age, the common childhood illnesses and thirteen pox were considered "common childhood diseases." Parents held quite benign views about them, considering these ailments "normal" and not especially dangerous. The message that every child had to go through between a hole with each of them conferred natural immunity.

Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the DOH National Epidemiology Center and president of the Philippine Foundation for Vaccination, says that in a certain extent such a view may still be true, but he says, "Measles can be somewhat life-threatening." The increase in population and the emergence of new viral strains mean that "there are more chances of complications and even death" in the wake of these "common childhood illnesses." Some of the complications arising from measles are encephalitis, pneumonia, diarrhea, deafness and even blindness.

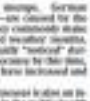
Measles is back in the news here, there because of the outbreak in the form of new cases leading to speculations that an outbreak has taken place. There have been a total of 742 confirmed cases from January to March this year, compared to just 222 in the whole of last year. Most of the cases have occurred in Metro Manila, compared to earlier last year, he has four infants (one of them eight months) have died from the disease.

Measles is a highly contagious disease, says Dr. Tayag. While a person infected with the influenza virus can transfer the virus to two-three people on average, a person infected with measles can transfer the virus to 12 to 15 more people. Most people show the appearance of measles' most common manifestation, the appearance of small, itchy pustules on the skin, signals the "onset" of the disease. But, says Dr. Tayag, it is during this period when measles is infectious up to four days before the appearance of the rash, and remains up to four days after the disappearance of the rash.

* * *

Why are we experiencing an upsurge in measles these days?

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

Measles—along with mumps, German measles and chicken pox—are caused by the same family of viruses. They commonly strike on appearance during cold weather months, says Dr. Tayag, but are usually "noticed" during the summer "because we have time." At this time, the number of cases would have increased and attracted public notice."

But the spread of these diseases is also an indication of shortcomings in the public health system. In 1998, during Tayag, the Department of Health embarked on a program that aimed to eliminate measles by 2008. And indeed, the country saw a drastic drop in the number of measles cases, especially after the launch of the "Ligtas Tigdas Dalo Dalo Measles" campaign in 2000, between 2000 and mid-2006, there were no "big" measles outbreaks. But, since Tayag, the number of measles cases has steadily been rising since 2007.

Dr. Tayag says, Tayag reports, "from five to 10 percent of the target population doesn't get vaccinated," which is why every time to five years the DOH embarks on a campaign to reinoculate all children up to five years old in an effort to provide protection for the "unvaccinated" children. "There is no danger of overexposure or of getting an overdose" of the vaccine, he adds.

* * *

Parents' responsibility is it to ensure that children are properly against measles and other diseases in the same family?

Yes, says Tayag, it is the responsibility of the DOH because it is the department that has the supply of vaccines and therefore it is its obligation, local governments, second, it is the responsibility of local government which are charged with implementing the immunization program, including making an announcement of schedules so it can be known to the public. Parents, last, it is the responsibility of parents to bring their children to health centers or rural health units to receive not just their measles shots, but all other vaccines covered by the expanded program on immunization (EPI), which is offered free.

As this time when local governments are embarking on their summer immunization, Tayag says the way some parents could also make sure is way home so that when the immunization team comes calling, the parent can make sure the child is inoculated.

Aimee Gary, assistant project manager for vaccines of UNA, which sponsored the press conference on measles, also appealed to mothers, or women of childbearing age, to make sure that they themselves are immunized before they get pregnant. A mother confers immunity against many diseases to her newborn, for a few months and especially if she breastfeeds the infant. Measles, however, is the exception. A baby is not protected against a disease like German measles, which if contracted during a woman's first trimester can cause congenital defects, including deafness, blindness and heart defects.

* * *

AT PRESENT, 40 Filipino children are screened for the EPI, which provides protection against seven diseases, from measles to the dangerous TB. DPT, hepatitis B, polio and measles. If parents bring their children to a private physician, they can avail themselves of the vaccines for a fee. Private physicians, however, must first, inspect the A, and the human papillomavirus (cervical cancer), HPV also provides a vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella, and costs P4,000 for 1 vaccine against HPV and the deaths of children.

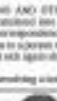
These vaccines are not cheap (they cost a few thousand pesos, depending on the doctor or hospital), but as we all know, prevention is a much cheaper option than treatment or hospitalization—or death.

'Binat'

THE WORD "BINAT" (AS), IN CEBUANO AND OTHER Filipino languages, "bastard") is usually translated into English as a slur. Sometimes there is more derogatory in the meaning, those describing what happens to a person who has recovered from an illness, but their jaw and upper dentures.

There is another meaning for binat, involving a longer time period, which is usually applied to people who, whom an older Filipino complains about chronic body pains, people will say she is suffering from binat resulting from ignoring certain practices related to childbirth.

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

In medical anthropology we use the term "explanatory models" to refer to the cultural people have about why we are healthy or ill. In the case of this sometimes-specific binat, the explanatory model suggests that childbirth has put the mother into a "cold" (malamig) state, together with a displacement of her uterus and her insides.

In response to this problem, new mothers are advised to get binat treatments. In the past, this was done by means of a rather unsophisticated, a spa where a masseur or lumas of various pains are believed were eliminated.

Similar practices are found in many parts of the world and anthropologists have a graphic translation of the procedure as "cooking the mother" or "mother roasting."

Manila, together with massage, is premised to restore the mother's body and bring her back to normal functioning. She is warned that if she fails to get enough rest, it will take her longer to recover from childbirth. Not only that, she may have to pay for risk neglect later in life in the form of body pains, which are then described as binat, minus the English "r-binat." Binat can involve a delay of many years, even decades. More than if middle-aged men have massage pains, it is not described as binat.

Bio-medically speaking, the body pains of men like have many different possible causes, usually associated with a lifetime of wear and tear in the muscles and joints. But the binat explanatory model is still worth looking at for its gender aspect.

One foot in the grave

I use binat as a powerful social metaphor, a way through which we acknowledge and describe the pain of people [illegible unreadable] experiencing. Pregnancy itself is seen as a difficult, if not dangerous, period exemplified by the folk expression that in each pregnancy, one of the woman's foot is in the grave (nasa buhay ang isang paa). Such perceptions mirror the realities of childbirth and maternity, pregnancy and child-delivery. Although many gains have been made—I anticipated the life of a pregnant woman, about 9,000 women still die each year in the Philippines from causes directly related to pregnancy and child-delivery.

But we know, too, from the statistics that many of the risks of pregnancy are preventable. Why then do we still experience more than binat explanations, as well as the expression about one foot being in the grave, are to be found more often among poorer and low-income women, who do go through unnecessary risks and traumatic experiences during pregnancy and childbirth. Binat is a way to complain the suffering memories of women deprived of access to maternal health services.

I would like to see our health programs tap this concept of binat to convince families and communities to give more attention to women's health in general, and that will include reproductive health. I describe binat as the unwarranted pain, pregnancy and childbirth, women face many other gender-related health problems. There are the various cancers specific to the woman's reproductive system: ovarian, uterine, cervical (the neck of the uterus) and endometrial (wall of the uterus). Breast cancer is occasionally reported to have hit the rate of one in every 20 women in the country.

Contrary to popular perceptions, sexually transmitted illnesses are more easily passed from men to women, rather than the other way around. The reason is partly biological; women being on the receiving end during sex, such infections as gonorrhea and chlamydia can cause pelvic inflammatory tract. There is also a social reason for this added vulnerability; women are more often forced into outside sex, especially when it involves her spouse because she is not allowed to say no.

Unequal power relationships also make women more vulnerable to violence in cases as being victims of violence, within the home and outside.

I could go on and on with the list of women's health vulnerabilities, many of which are often unrecognized. Even in public health and medical research, there are many gender blindspots that need to be addressed, as in the case of binat. For example, much of the research on cardiovascular health involves men, because women were presumed to be at lower risk of heart attacks and strokes, a misconception based on the recent view that women have also attacked them.

I would like to use the concept of binat to push us and for more attention to the health needs of older women. While such women are the most binat, it may be a way of signaling alarm coming from any number of possible causes.

Because the list longer than ours—in the Philippines, right up to the age of 60 years old, the life expectancy of Filipino women is higher than for Filipino men—but the quality of this longer life may often be less. Again, there is a gender difference, with elderly women in higher risk for osteoporosis and hip fractures. We need (we) to look more into the gender aspects for medical risks (health, cognitive emotions and others), memory loss, and Alzheimer's.

We can say that the problem of elderly women aren't so much how the failure to perform the such rituals that may says failure in relation to women's needs. Because how more binat, many having to work outside the home with minimal help from husbands and responsibilities. In short, working life means need to be paid lower than men, and are not as well covered by social security and health insurance. Because many are in the informal sector (the example, vendors), they will not have their own social security or PhilHealth coverage, and instead end up as a beneficiary of their husbands, or children.

Many women therefore end up in old age without maternal savings and safety nets. I have found, too, that even with women professionals, who have comfortable salaries and social security benefits, there is a greater tendency for to have no stash of savings or retirement funds because they are more generous spending for others: their husbands, partners, children, even nephews, nieces and grandchildren.

Binat speaks to us of chronic illnesses, are part of women, but of a health care system, if not a system.

Email: mlan@inquirer.com.ph

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The temptation of Saint Anthony

WHILE INSIDERS KNOW FORT SANTIAGO and its long history, very few knowledge that Fort San Antonio Abad which lies hidden between the Metropolitan Museum of Manila on Roxas Boulevard and the Intramuros Golf Course of Palanan Street. While the Fort has been preserved and is open to the public, it remains one of Manila's little secrets. It is the venue for the annual seminary orchestra hosted by the governor of the Intramuros Bank, but few know about the part it played in history.

Every Intramuros people know who San Antonio Abad is and what he did to deserve sainthood. Many of my students confuse this heroine with the Franciscan saint of the same name, San Antonio de Padua, whose picture is usually what I show in class. So, to set the record straight, San Antonio is depicted as an old man with a flowing beard, usually wearing a black cape and coral, and at his feet is a pig with a bell around its neck.

San Antonio Abad lived and is to be credited by those who succumb to their sexual temptations. Legend says he fled the world and led in a cave to find God in solitude. To this the devil came to tempt him out of holiness and the cure by appearing in the guise of a beautiful naked woman while the saint was meditating. When he refused to succumb to divine withdrawal, San Antonio grabbed a flaming branch from the fire and drove the devil out. He was never tempted that way again, though I wonder if the devil should have tried disguising himself as a man.

Now that the Catholic Church and the Department of Health have united forces over the use of condoms, perhaps it is time to revive the cult of San Antonio Abad. The Church is opposed to condoms because they promote sexual activity out of marriage and are a perfect tool to control sin. The DOH encourages the use of condoms to curb the AIDS epidemic. One argues on the level of spirit and morals, the other on health and the body.

The hedgerow saint of San San Antonio Abad

Ambeth R. Ocampo

reminds us of the day the United States handed him our land and history. The Fort was bombard of by the US Naval Squadron on Manila Bay under Adm. George Dewey on Aug. 13, 1898, leading to the surrender of the Spanish officials and military leaded up in Intramuros. After Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, the party was not yet over because he did not have enough troops to take the city. He controlled Manila Bay but not Spanish Manila and its environs.

This was why Emilio Aguinaldo was brought home from exile in Hong Kong on board a US ship to renew the war against Spain and keep the enemy occupied. By Aug. 13, 1898, Aguinaldo's troops had surrounded Intramuros and cut off its food and water supply. It was only a matter of time before the Spanish garrison surrendered. He did not want to deliver the city to the Filipinos so they made a deal with the Americans. To save their honor, Dewey would battle first San Antonio Abad, which was far from Intramuros, then after a mock battle, Manila would surrender while Manila would be surrendered to the Americans.

At the time, Aguinaldo was led to believe that the Americans were his friends, allies who were set to help him gain the freedom of his country. He was to be sorely disappointed.

Upon the Americans successfully subdue, there were others who advised him to take action, but the others were unheeded, and has now become a major when of in our history.

On the morning of Aug. 8, 1898 a certain Private

Comments are welcome at mcampo@inquirer.com.ph

Observe 5Rs of 'clean and green campaign'

WITH JUST SEVERAL WEEKS left before the May 2010 elections, we ask our politicians to actively campaign in words and deeds, in a "clean and green" campaign.

Well-meaning public servants are not only interested in tapping election-season votes, period. They can also commit their deeds of love to win over the electorate will not degrade or destroy the environment.

If they are really pro-Filipino, we expect them to exercise utmost care and responsibility in matters for environment and not to defile Mother Earth on which our life and future as a nation depends.

Specifically, we urge all candidates, including the party-list groups, to abide by the "5Rs" of ecological campaigning (reuse, refuse, reject, recycle and segregate).

"Reuse/s" from spending for political advertisements and other forms of election propaganda beyond the legal limits. Don't drive your way to victory by overspending.

"Refuse" campaign tools by keeping the debasin of materials to what is only necessary. Say no to unnecessary use of paper, plastic or recycled stock as evidence, bunting, balloons and, yes, some glitzy fashion-conscious dear.

"Reject" campaign tools by keeping the debasin of materials to what is only necessary. Say no to unnecessary use of paper, plastic or recycled stock as evidence, bunting, balloons and, yes, some glitzy fashion-conscious dear.

"Recycle" campaign materials, particularly the widely used corporate banners, and repurpose them as roofing material, school bags or as carry bags for relief goods. Make sure that sport materials do not get dumped or burned.

"Remove" election campaign materials immediately after election day. Why let them, for long months down and scrape your posters off the walls.

On May 11, we would like to see all the candidates, led by the party-list groups, cleaning party time, cleaning up the streets of campaign propaganda, and reusing and recycling whatever can be salvaged.

We the tribe of Mother Earth, are fearless in our unique pollutants to disclose their agenda and plan of action for solving the many building environmental problems affecting our nation and planet.

LETTERS

ANTONIO LA VIÑA
president, EcoWaste Coalition
Unit 2105 Eagle Court,
26 Matalino St., UP Q.C.

Whitewash of deadly clinic fire feared

I AM THE DRIVER OF ONE OF the four trucks of the fire that gutted the Caloocan Community Clinic around 2:45 a.m. last Feb. 9, 2010. The victims were nothing more to the many commentary series as reported in the newspapers, mostly students of St. Luke's College of Medicine in Quezon City. Each of them was considered an exceptionally outstanding scholar with a very promising future as a professional and a public servant.

The cause of the fire remains undetermined up to this time. As partners, we only work in the truck, hoping to find somewhere in hearing a clear picture of what really happened. For us, it is only incidental that [illegible] when [illegible] and when somebody is found to be responsible—whether by hook or by negligence—for this horrible tragedy.

Our concern at this time is that the investigation into the incident has been complicated and made extremely quiet. We are afraid that there may be subsidiaries efforts to keep the incident from the media and the public eye. Our efforts to get an update on the progress and status of the investigation from the competent medical institution and local police authorities all seems to be going in vain. This has prompted us to file a complaint and to request the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation.

The near-objective feeling has also led us to seek help from the media. We want the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We are not after media mileage, talk or the kill and media and reporters is any way possible in any investigative pursuit. We have all pertinent documents and evidences and eyewitness accounts for reference anytime.

There is no way to deny the tragedies and pain of a parent losing a child. But the agony is made worse by the blank wall we are facing in our search for the truth and the questions and fears—about what really happened in the tragedy—left hanging. We hope media can empathize with us and help us on this matter.

—OLIVE M. BUENAFLOR, LL.B.A. Claimant, Caloocan
Patrick 4, Barangay San Isidro,
Rizal

Bold economic reforms, not new taxes

THE LETTER IS IN RESPONSE to the statement of Finance Secretary Margarito Teves that the probability of the next administration not raising taxes is remote. ("Incoming admin to raise taxes," Business, 2/12/10, B1)

The coming administration should look for alternative ways to generate resources for the government and reject the option of imposing more taxes.

The reality is that revenue losses are rooted in the industrial circuit. One reason for the declining tax intake of the government is precisely the dwindling industrial output, the main beneficiary among the different economic sectors (agriculture and services) experiences. As reflected in the NSO statistics, the number of formally registered businesses has been going down since the mid-1990s.

What has been expanding instead is the informal sector. But being informal and unregistered, enterprises do not have to pay taxes. Instead, they are exempted from the free trade zones which are given fiscal incentives (until yrs., are also beginning to leave, in favor of China and Vietnam). And so are the smugglers and hence evaders.

Thus, we as the Trade humbly suggest to our presidential aspirants and eventually to the next administration to put our economic house in order and institute bold reforms, including the implementation of zero-tax revenue measures.

First, there should be a no-tax-on-our-dear option smuggling. Big time smugglers and their cohorts in government should be hauled to prison. By stamping out smuggling, the government will be able to recover lost tax revenues and avoid the Duterte and similar impositions of new taxes. By stamping out smuggling, the government will also help save domestic industries from being swamped by cheap and unusual imports and, therefore, help save local jobs. As a result, by helping sustain control local production and bring order to our home turf, the government shall be in a power position to increase tax collection and revive more jobs.

Second, the drive against tax evasion should be intensified and the resolutions of all big tax cases pending in courts should be hastened.

Third, tariffs for all industrial and agricultural goods should be re-enforced upwards based on the Philippines' maximum WTO threshold, to exempt for now basic food and local industry, as level-the business field.

Our new bodies must have the political will to implement bold economic reforms. Otherwise, they will clearly represent a clear break from the past. We need to break away from the present politics of regime. If we are to usher in a new government for our suffering people.

—JESUS A. MENDOZA,
Manila Bulletin,
Sub-Trade Alliance (Sub-Trade),
salamendoza@gmail.com

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Meralco service at work.

It takes regular maintenance and constant upgrading of our power distribution facilities to ensure the delivery of reliable electricity. In this regard, some power interruptions in the following areas are unavoidable.
Please be assured that we are working as efficiently and as quickly to ensure restoring the least inconvenience.

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2010
MANILA (BINONDO AND INTRAMUROS)
BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 4:00AM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT BINONDO 1301
Portion of Claro M. Recto Ave. (Binondong Ibaan) St. from and Muelle De La Industria to Lacuesta Sts. including Medalla Milagrosa, MCDonald's, Tabacalera Plaza, Tabacalera and San Fernando Sts. in Binondo.
Portion of Juan Luna St. from Plaza San Lorenzo (Plaza Calderon De La Barca) to near Claro M. Recto Ave. (Avenida) including Plaridel Bank and Jollibee in Binondo.
BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 12:00N – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS BINONDO 1304, 1305 AND 1306
Portion of Claro M. Recto Ave. (Avenida) from 1900 MCT to near Cerrada St. including Del Pan, Tabacalera and San Antonio Sts. in Binondo.
Portion of Del Pan, Lacuesta, Medalla Milagrosa, Sto. Cristo, San Fernando and Nicanor Reyes Sts. from Del Pan to Asuncion (Asuncion) to near De La Rama St., including Plaza San Lorenzo Ruiz (Plaza Calderon De La Barca), Calderon, Evelista, Yang-Heng, San Rueben, Cerrada, Nicanor Reyes and Ma. in Binondo.
Portion of Intramuros, Recto Ave. Muelle De La Industria and Primera Sts. from Intramuros to Intramuros Sts. in Binondo.
Portion of Nagtahan, Recto Ave. Muelle De La Industria and Primera Sts. from Intramuros to Intramuros Sts. in Binondo.
Portion of Elcano St. and Bonifacio Dr. from near Muelle Dalt. to Area Circle including Muelle De Tacoma St. in Southern Harbor.
Portion of Andres Soriano Jr. Ave. (Avenue) and Magallanes Drive from Bonifacio Drive to Jones Bridge including Andaluza Dr., Luna (Calle Real Del Palacio), Cabildo, Solana and Tte. Torres in Intramuros.
Portion of Mayor Antonio Villegas St. (Andaluza) from Guadalupe Bridge to near Nathaniel Almeda Legaspi St. (Concepcion) in Intramuros.
REASON: Preventive maintenance and testing work inside Meralco Binondo substation.

BULACAN
BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 5:00AM AND THEN BETWEEN 2:00PM AND 3:00PM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ANGAT 1217
Portion of M. Fernando, Hipolito and St. of Poblacion Sts. from Meralco Angat substation to Brgy. Sta. Cruz of Angat to and including Brgy. Banghan, Bustos, Mungat, Bustos, Poblacion and Tiaong to Norzagaray.
BETWEEN 2:00PM AND 3:00PM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS ANGAT 1217, ANGAT 1218
Portion of J. P. Rizal, Jose Bernardo Sts. and Encanto Road from Bulacan Bulacan to Brgy. Bunducan (Sta. Guadalupe) St. in Brgy. Sta. Cruz, Angat including Brgys. Bunducan 1, Bunducan 2, Poblacion, Tabang, Iberia, Pagkakaisa, Lawa, Camachile, Encanto, Pulilan, San Roque, Sta. Cruz, Sta. Ines, Sta. Maria, Sta. Monica, Pinagtulayan, Pinagkuartelan, Pinagsimbahan, Pinagtalleran and Pantol, Talaksan, Mapulang Damo, Tibagan, Tiaong, Sibul, Sulucan, Matungao, Sta. Lucia, Lalig, Banaban, Marilao, Binagbag, Donacion, Encanto, Pulilan, San Roque and Sta. Cruz in Angat.
Portion of Bulacan, Bustos, Sta. Maria, Sta. Monica and Sta. Ines from near Bulacan Bulacan to Brgy. Bunducan to near Bunducan St. in Brgy. Sta. Cruz including Brgys. Talaks

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

NPA rate for campaign: ₱250,000 for local bet

LUCENA CITY—COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS HAVE STARTED DEmanding up to P250,000 from candidates to allow them to campaign in insurgency areas without being harassed.

One candidate for mayor, who refused to be identified for fear of retaliation, said he was approached by a rebel demanding P250,000 from him as permit to campaign payment.

The payment, the candidate said, would allow him and other candidates to run either to campaign in insurgency areas.

"We're willing to pay but the demand is too big. We still negotiate for a lesser amount," said the candidate.

"Last time, I only paid around P50,000 plus some canned goods, medicines and cell phone cards," he said.

Lt. Gen. Roland Detudelli, head of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar, appealed to candidates to reject rebel demands.

"These terrorists no longer enjoy the republic to frighten the people or the candidates," Detudelli said.

The Army said the number of guerrillas in Quezon has been reduced to 262 as of 1999.

Detudelli said candidate could always request for security from the Army. "We can stop this extortion," he said.

The campaign period for local elections starts on March 26.

But the candidate, who revealed he was approached by rebels, said some candidates have no choice.

"There's an unspoken norm in all elections here to avoid trouble," he said.

On Tuesday, Rolando Mendoza, a retired soldier and was killed in a five-minute clash. Hostilities and an undetermined number of casualties were killed in the encounter.

Lt. Col. Noel Alexander, head of the 201st Infantry Battalion, said 1 battle-ready unit set in to secure bystander but was actually negotiating with Paguntos to obtain a permit to campaign.

The military said guerrillas operate as much as ₱5 billion from candidates every year. (MJR) I Mellar Lit., Inquirer Southern Luzon

NEWSBRIEFS

DAVAO CITY

Philippine eagle hatched

A NEW PHILIPPINE EAGLE WAS HATCHED SUNday at the breeding facility of the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) in Malagos in Calinan district.

Daniela Salvador, PEF program director, said on Tuesday the eaglet weighed 137.3 grams.

The new eaglet, the 22nd from the center's conservation breeding program, is the offspring of eaglet Sid and Princess Mawashi.

Salvador said the birth of the new eaglet was another milestone in PEF following the birth of the first eaglet to be bred in captivity, Pagasa, in 1983 and the first release into the wild of a captive-bred eagle in 2004.

Salvador said the PEF is now looking for partners to support the new eaglet.

The PEF's breeding program seeks to increase the number of Philippine Eagles, a highly endangered species.

At least 400 pairs remain in the wild, according to estimates from both government and private conservation groups.

Jaime R. Bustillo, Inquirer Mindanao

NEGROS

Rebel suspect nabbed

MILITARY TROOPS arrested a rebel that the military said was involved in an ambush in Oriental Mindoro on Saturday that killed 11 soldiers.

Lt. Col. Noel Detoyato, spokesperson of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, identified the rebel as Hayo Gan alias "Tag."

Detoyato said they had admitted his participation in the attack.

The military is investigating the possibility that "national liberators" may have led to the killing of the 11 soldiers.

The investigation was expected to be completed today.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

CEBU

3 dead in Cebu fire

A LAWYER, his wife and their house help were killed in a fire that destroyed their house in Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City, on early Thursday.

Police said the bodies of Manuel Pastrana, 78, his wife Norma, 74, and their house help, Lily were found a few meters from each other in the living room of their house in Calderon Compound in Barangay Guadalupe.

Antonio Gonzales, arson investigator, said the fire spread too quickly that the victims were unable to leave the house, which was made of light materials.

Cebu & Jiraon, Inquirer Visayas

LAGUNA

Laguna fire kills girl

A TWO-YEAR-OLD girl died in a fire that destroyed five houses in San Pedro, Laguna, on Monday, police said Tuesday.

Authorities found the burned body of Nathalie Grace Celino inside their house's first floor bathroom.

Supt. Ginoy Macaraig, San Pedro police chief, said Celino's parents were able to bring her three siblings out of the burning house but were not able to return for her.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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MY APOLOGY

FOR SELLING COUNTERFEIT AUTOMOTIVE STEERING AND SUSPENSION SPARE PARTS BEARING THE TRADEMARK "555"

I, **SEVERINO BERNARDINO** the owner of **LAFAYETTE AUTO SUPPLY** located at Km. 32, National Highway, Canlubang, Biñan, Laguna, hereby apologize to **SANKEI INDUSTRY CO. LTD., of Japan** and its exclusive distributor in the Philippines, **BSB JUNROSE AUTOPARTS CORPORATION**, for the distribution and sales of counterfeit automotive steering and suspension spare parts bearing the renowned trademark "555", which contravened the Intellectual Property Code (Republic Act No. 8293) and infringed the trademark "555" as well as the intellectual property rights of **SANKEI INDUSTRY CO. LTD., of Japan** and **BSB JUNROSE AUTOPARTS CORPORATION** to the said automotive steering suspension spare parts.

Henceforth, I undertake to respect the intellectual property rights of **SANKEI INDUSTRY CO. LTD., of Japan** and **BSB JUNROSE AUTOPARTS CORPORATION.**

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₱78 ₱43
₱43 ₱10
₱45 ₱61
₱48 ₱41
₱72 ₱16

BUY win

Food lack forces 'lumad' to eat poison crop

KIDAPAWAN CITY—FOOD HAS become so scarce again in the hinterlands of North Cotabato that members of the province's indigenous communities have turned to poison cassava to survive the dry spell.

In previous years, when the El Niño phenomenon also destroyed crops and killed animals, at least a dozen lumad, including children, died from eating wild yam or kapya.

For the lumad, dying on an empty stomach was more painful, says Datu Kiblangan, a leader of the Tiruray tribe in Matalam, North Cotabato.

Kiblangan said the dry spell that communities are experiencing in the hinterlands of the town since January has forced starving lumad to dig wild yam and cook them for meals.

Wild yam, or kapya, is edible if cooked well but a highly poisonous when ill prepared.

Kiblangan, of the Southern Baptist Church in Barangay Tunipad in Matalam, said at least 32 lumad families started subsisting on kapya because of lack of food.

"This is the kind of food that the tribesmen would eat in times of difficulties," he said.

Kiblangan said the corn fields that the lumads were hoping harvest in his food had wilted and have become useless due to the intense heat.

He said there has been no assistance from the government so far.

"We are forced to eat this kind of food for survival since the government has not extended of any assistance to us yet," Kiblangan said, when asked if the lumad were not afraid of eating potentially poisonous root crops.

He said preparing kapya as an alternative food was not an easy task.

"It needs a very meticulous preparation to produce poisonfree dough for safe consumption," he said.

Kiblangan said the lumad should wait for the period of harvesting sweet potato before they can eat kapya.

But it could not be eaten yet even after that process.

Kiblangan said the kapya should still be washed in flowing water for four to five days to remove the toxic powder particles.

He said the lumad would then slice the wild yam into chips and dry the chips under the sun for two weeks.

The chips would then be pounded to produce flour before it can be cooked.

Kiblangan said the government should also add more land to alleviate the condition of the lumad, who cannot do anything but try to find alternative sources of food due to lack of assistance.

In Mlang, some 5,000 ha. are dry because of lack of water, the provincial agriculture office said.

Farmlands in other parts of the province, including those considered irrigated, are also drying up. With reports from Orlando Dingal and Cirelle Aparrosa, Inquirer Mindanao

ENJOYING SUMMER Armed with a fishing rod and pieces of shrimps for bait, a lad spends his leisure summer time catching fish at the Dulahican Port in Lucena City.

Cops rescue Chinese-Filipino businessman seized in Bago City

By Carla P. Gomez and Elmo Aragon
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—POLICE BRIGADIER said a 26-year-old businessman who was abducted in Bago City in Negros Occidental on March 8, authorities said yesterday.

Chief Insp. Jefferson Dorcilles, spokesperson of the Negros Occidental police, said Jordan Chua was rescued 2 a.m. of March 10 in Toledo City, Cebu.

The reported police office said Chua's abductors had fled before police came, leaving their captive behind.

It wasn't known if ransom was paid by Chua's family, engaged in commercial fishing in Zamboanga City.

Chua was abducted while biking with three other companions in Purok Michelle, Barangay Dulao in Bago City by four unidentified gunmen in a silver gray Toyota Hiandin with no license plate.

His companion, Joel Arroyo (no relation to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo), 41, was shot in the chest and is still confined at the Bacolod Adventist Medical Center. The two other bikers were unharmed.

A police official, who was part of the team that rescued Chua, said Chua has been examined with his family.

The official talked on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to discuss details of Chua's rescue.

The police source, however, refused to provide more details.

Some of the gunmen who snatched Chua are being hunted as of his yesterday afternoon.

The suspects are still in the area covered by the Central Visayas police and could be captured soon.

Toledo City is on the western side of Cebu facing the Tañon Strait and across San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

The Inquirer got in touch with some police officers in the regional PNP office but they refused to comment.

There were reports that the abductors demanded P60 million in P50 million in ransom from the Chua family in exchange for Chua's freedom but these remained unconfirmed.

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"The following set of pictures compares the product label of an ORIGINAL DENSO COMPRESSOR and a counterfeit one."

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DA goes cloud seeding in Bicol

NAGA CITY—Cloud seeding operations by the Department of Agriculture (DA) are bringing rains to Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon provinces in Bicol.

"It seems that the cloud seeding operation is already bringing rains but we have to fully determine per if it is also brought about by some atmospheric factors," said Marilyn Sia Catolino, acting OIC regional executive director.

Sia Catolino said DA workers started cloud seeding operations on March 4 and so far have gone on 18 airplane sorties in Albay, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur and Masbate.

She said the 10k target was 70 hours of sorties or seed clouds with iodized salt, with an estimated cost of P3.5 million.

But Catolino said the DA would assess the situation to determine whether to continue with cloud seeding.

Fernando Alejandro, regional director of the Office of Civil Defense, said the dry spell had already brought P356 million in crop damages in Bicol, with Camarines Sur as the biggest loser with P124 million in damages. Joan Bracamonte Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

A NEW ASPHORO personnel carrier is patrolled at the AFP's main headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo. The sight of such vehicles of war and of soldiers has brought fear to many villages in the path of the government's war on terror and rebellion.

Site of Abu suspects' killing now ghost town

By Jaime S. Miguela
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—LESS trust has become a virtual ghost island in Sulu following Sunday's antiterror operation by Marines that left 10 people dead and several others wounded or arrested, police said.

Senior Supt. Joseph Estrada, Sulu police director, said he saw only a few residents when he visited the fishing community on Luuk-reuan Island off Siasi town on Tuesday.

"We were told the residents were afraid the Marines would come back as they fled," he said.

The island has a population of at least 12,000, mostly belonging to the Tausug ethnolinguistic group, according to Siasi Mayor Arthur Wahiab.

"Samals are peace-loving people," Wahiab said. "Every time they are caught in conflict, they move away and settle in some places where there is no war."

Estrada said the police could not failed to convince the residents to return to their villages. They were afraid of what the soldiers could do to them, even at the sight of a Navy ship near the island, he said.

The deaths of 10 villagers on Sunday were enough proof that the Marines were out to harm them, the officer said.

"Those killed were translator civilians. It was not because one of them (Norsima Amil), the 16-year old girl was supposed to graduate from high school this year," he said.

A source from the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in Western Mindanao said the agency had received reports that most of the victims were preparing to fish when the Marines stormed the island at dawn.

Farmers warned vs false claims on 'biofertilizers'

ICRISAT rice suffering from severe heat brought by El Niño, farms, like this one in Indiada, also suffer from years of use of fertilizers and pesticides.

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—FARMERS were warned against using so-called microbial biofertilizers following tests conducted by a science research agency that showed these substances do not increase yield as advertised.

The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) said since-banning biofertilizers were falsely advertised.

"Biofertilizers are not effective in promoting growth and increasing rice and corn yield," said Benito Bonoan, PhilRice executive director, who cited tests conducted in 10 provinces that covered both wet and dry months.

Advocates claim that biofertilizers are microorganisms carrying substances that were designed to fix atmospheric nitrogen, add minerals and other nutrients to soil, produce growth-promoting hormones and serve as agents against pests and diseases.

Tests made in farms in Laguna, Isabela, Aguasc, Bohol, Ilocos Norte, Negros Occidental, Leyte, Misamis Ocbo, Samar and Camarines Sur tried to evaluate the substance's effectiveness in irrigated and upland soil ecosystems.

"The perception that these materials are fertilizers has been debunked because they only provide small amounts of nutrients, or not at all, required by high-yielding crops," Bonoan said.

"It cannot reduce the rate of usual inorganic fertilizer application by 50 percent and the cost of producing crops," he added.

The study was conducted by Michelle Castillo and Cesar Manuel, PhilRice senior research specialist and senior consultant, respect.

They conducted the study in collaboration with PhilRice branch stations, regional agencies of the Department of Agriculture, and state universities and colleges.

Andrea Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon

Chinese held for undeclared cash flies to HK

By Chito O. Aragon
Inquirer Visayas

LEGE CITY—CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AT THE Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA) are under investigation over the disappearance of a Chinese national who was held for trying to smuggle in HK$1 million in cash.

Cebu customs collector Ramon Alberto, in a phone interview, said on Tuesday that he ordered the investigation of customs personnel at the MCIA following the disappearance of Zhang Ji Feng, who has since flown to Hong Kong.

Feng was held upon his entry at the MCIA after customs examiners saw tape and Mercado Encarnacion found HK$1 million in cash in the bag last Saturday.

The customs examiners seized the money because Feng failed to declare it, which is a violation of Philippine laws.

BSP rules

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas requires anyone who brings in or out of the Philippines foreign currency in excess of US$10,000 to declare it in writing and also declare where it came from and for what it would be used.

Casimiro Mendoza Jr., Bureau of Immigration alien control officer, said Feng left the Philippines for Hong Kong via Manila past 5 p.m. on Sunday.

George Macambles, MCIA customs police chief, said on Wednesday he had no idea that Feng had already left the Philippines.

He admitted, however, that he released Feng to the custody of Atty. Jose Marie Aquino, treasury head of Lucky Star, a foreign firm that operates a casino at the Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino Hotel.

To the rescue

Right after Feng's arrest, Aquino appeared at the customs police office in MCIA with lawyer Rico Flores representing Lucky Star Aquino, Macambles said, added that Feng be released into her custody.

Macambles said he did nothing illegal when he released Feng to Aquino. He said he did so after Aquino signed a document promising to present Feng to authorities during investigation.

Macambles also said only Feng was involved in the smuggling attempt as a certain Jenny Hong, who was also tagged in the case, was just an interpreter.

Female hospital worker sues exec over manhandling

By Joey Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—AN EMPLOYEE OF THE Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC) has filed an administrative complaint for physical abuse against a middle rank hospital official before the Civil Service Commission.

Engineer Jose Jocano, EVRMC supervising administrative officer (OIC-acting capacity), was accused of physical assault by Melba Uy in the afternoon of Jan. 8 as they crossed their paths at the hospital's corridor.

In her own-page complaint, Uy alleged that Jocano pointed fist to the wall near the hospital's budget office and tried to strangle her.

Several hospital employees tried to restrain Jocano but he lunged Uy's head against a table, according to Uy, an employee assigned in the hospital's dietary section.

Uy said she suffered a 5-centimeter cut in the forehead and is badly bruised hand. She said she had to go on leave for 30 days.

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GMA declares state of calamity in Mindanao

From page A1

good faith" to the President.

The government is banking on Ms Arroyo to declare a state of calamity to help solve the worsening power problem on the island, which has been fraught by rotating brownouts lasting 8-10 hours.

Secretary Ricardo Saludo, presidential spokesperson, yesterday said by phrase that Ms Arroyo "has declared" a state of calamity in Mindanao.

Press Secretary Cerilo Abalos Jr said Ms Arroyo signed the declaration on Wednesday.

Mindanao's internal revenue allotment (IRA) amounted to P48.8 billion in 2009. The IRA is an LGU share of the national government's tax revenues and one of its sources of income.

POWER POWWOW Cotabato Rep. Jesus Sacdalan (left) and Cotabato City Rep. Clarissa Cerilo (right) point out the power energy problem in Mindanao during a public hearing of the House committee on energy headed by Pampanga Rep. Jose Miguel Arroyo (center). Flanking them are (from left) Representatives Antonio Cuptiano Jr. of Davao Del Norte, Raymond Democrito Mendoza of the TUCP Jon Aquino II of Agusan del Norte, Mario Douglas Cagas IV of Davao Del Sur and Reha Rodriguez of Cagayan De Oro City

P5.5 billion for generators

Cerilo Abalos, deputy presidential spokesperson, said the calamity funds would be used to purchase generating sets that were initially announced to cost P5.5 billion.

"The importation of generators, maybe even power barges which have much higher energy outputs will require calamity funds that will be mobilized by the declaration of a state of calamity," Abalos said.

The House committee on energy, chaired by Pampanga Rep. Jose Miguel Arroyo, a son of the President, has placed the national government's calamity fund at P12 billion.

At a public hearing at the Apo View Hotel in Davao City, the committee yesterday came up with a resolution urging Ms Arroyo to allocate P5.5 billion to address the power deficiency in Mindanao and to use the remaining P6.5 billion for the equipment storage.

The fund will come from the budget of the Office of the President and from the calamity fund that will be available upon the declaration of a state of calamity by the President.

Trip to Tawi-Tawi

The resolution was passed before Ms Arroyo declared a state of calamity.

Ms Arroyo flew to Tawi-Tawi to inspect the construction of three bridges, inauguration of a water supply improvement and then to Davao to bring del Monte to inspect a road project.

She was accompanied by Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales and Secretary Jesse Dureza of the Mindanao Development Authority. They confirmed to reporters by text that she had approved the recommendation to declare a state of calamity in the island.

The government had backtracked on a move to declare an emergency in Mindanao and call for a special session after Congress leaders said it would be difficult to muster a quorum in the heat of the campaign season.

Declaring an emergency would have allowed state-owned National Power Corp. to purchase or lease generating sets needed to produce 300 megawatts (MW) in additional capacity for Mindanao.

Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes said it would take 2-4 months to purchase and set up the generating sets.

The existing brownouts in Mindanao is a result of a huge shortfall in power supply on the island. Because of the dry spell, the province's capacity of hydroelectric power plants, Mindanao's main sources of electricity, has dropped to less than 18 percent, according to Reyes.

Blowing LGU efforts

Assistant Gov. Miguel Dominguez said Mr Arroyo's declaration "will just weaken many of local governmental units to mitigate the impact of (EDSA)."

"We've been going around town to see the school officials on brownouts, etc. We'll declare state of calamity in the province next week after completion of the report. We can't declare without basis," Dominguez said.

But short-term solution, the national government should tap generators to assist Mindanao's power demand, according to Dominguez.

Gabriela party-list Rep. Liza Maza, however, questioned the declaration.

Why not in Isabela?

"Why this declaration when there is a bigger crisis in Isabela or Tuguegarao, which are flooded for by El Niño? Why is Mindanao where not? Isn't she moving to solve the problem? Is she experimenting with Mindanao again, testing the waters for a nationwide declaration?" Maza asked.

Earlier, in Davao City, Vicente Lao, chair of the Mindanao Business Council, said the Agus and Pulangi Hydroelectric complex was in a very critical state that even the rain expected to come in June would not be able to remedy it.

No power on May 10

"With the way things are going now, the whole Agus plant will shut down and it will cause the whole of the Mindanao grid to collapse. And that would be 40 days from now. And if that happens, there will be no power during the election," Lao said.

Lao, vice chair of the Mindanao Energy Power alliance, added the data that the energy problem in Mindanao could be over once the rain comes in June.

He said the problem that Mindanao was facing was worse than what it encountered in 2008 and 2009.

With reports from Aine Ramos in Manila; and Judy Quiroz, Agaches Z. Zeno and Al Rivera (Inquirer Mindanao)

LIGHTS OUT Vic Lao, chair of the Mindanao Business Council, warns of a severe power crisis during the committee hearing

Palace lauds Verzosa; Noy fears he may be retired

From page A1

"It's been a long time since I trusted 6000. Dowd out what do we say... I want to give General Jesus the benefit of the doubt, but it is better that we err on the side of caution," Esperon said in a press conference at the Bangko Ng'ayapot.

Esperon said Ms Arroyo had done a "meticulous" job in appointing Verzosa and other members of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1978 in key positions in the AFP.

"The President has the right, but she should have done it meticulously. Before he's starting to AFP chief of staff, automatically and is clearly linked to him (if would) at least give the appearance of neutrality, given the importance of the transition," he said.

"It is, I think, gratifying to note that PMA chief Verzosa has once again given us his assurance that he will abide by its duties as a uniformed officer," Ochoa added.

In answer to a question, Ochoa said Aquino's relatives and reporters on Tuesday night that he would not back Bangit, the new AFP chief of staff, should the latter try to install Mr Aquino as holdover president in the event of a failure of the first automated election in the country.

He said the 120,000-strong PNP would not back any violation of the Constitution, which mandates a new President after June 30.

Bangit's promise

But he said there was no reason to suspect that Mr Aquino, whose term ends on June 30, would use the military to create an artificial power vacuum.

Ochoa noted that Bangit himself had said he would not allow himself or the military to be used for partisan politics.

"This is something that General Bangit himself has promised to do, so required by his own oath as a soldier," Ochoa said.

At the turnover ceremony in Camp Aguinaldo on Wednesday, Bangit said he will "unselfishly fully perform his duties and ensure that the military would remain neutral during the elections.

He also said he had not received any illegal orders from Mr Aquino, which was why he had "so much respect for him".

The President herself said her administration was committed to ensure a peaceful transition of power.

Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal said the Commission on Elections would hold Bangit—the senior sidekick-cum-classmate of Mr Aquino's father-in-law Gen Panfilo Lacson—to his promise of the Presidential Security Guard in 2000, 2007—to his word.

But Larrazabal dismissed rumors that Bangit's appointment as AFP chief of staff was a prelude to election rigging, saying the former was running against because of the election system.

"We in the Comelec are committed to conduct peaceful elections, and that is what we will do. People will have decides and the best way to address those is to do our job and do it well," he said.

Failure of elections

According to Sterling Bank Asia treasurer Roland Arnaiz, foreign analysts were apprehensive that a banning of election results could create problem of instability.

He said fears were growing that a failure of elections was a real risk.

Quoting Mr Arroyo's election lawyer Romulo Macalintal, Drew said a failure of elections was the inability of voters to fill out ballots among the seven positions Mr Aquino wants to hold on June 30, or a lack of ballots in a voting precinct.

"Once you have filled out the ballot, the electoral process is completed. That is the heart of it," Drew said.

He added: "It is easier to talk about failure of elections, and we anybody has bothered to define it.

"If you don't define something clearly how can you measure it? And if you can't measure it, how can you evaluate the risk involved?"

Neric Acosta's take

According to LP presidential candidate Neric Acosta, Bangit's appointment as AFP chief of staff and the recent behavior of the Comelec were connected.

"This government is not yielding an inch. There is no guarantee of a peaceful transfer of power, because Mr Aquino wants to hold on to power by as long as he can," Acosta said on Wednesday in Sweetlet City.

He also said the Comelec's removal of LP provincials—Governor Pedro Rodriguez of Ilocos, Ed Panlilio of Pampanga and Joselito Mendiola of Bulacan—did not inspire confidence in its impartiality. With reports from Zyrille Alvar L. Abaya and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. in Manila, Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

MMDA: Wear any color but yellow in meantime

From page A1

and other vehicles, and even the uniforms of its personnel.

MMDA Chair Oscar Inciong said the move was "nonpolitical," but a number of employees claimed that the timing of the paint job was highly suspect, especially with the national elections coming up in a couple of months.

Inciong also announced the agency's change in official color at the flag ceremony on Monday.

"Starting tomorrow, pink is not our official color anymore. You may not wear your pink uniforms to work, and instead you can use civilian clothes," he told the gathering of employees.

No yellow

"You can wear any color you want, just not yellow," he added, eliciting a few chuckles.

Loaded words, these, considering the colors that currently define the presidential and vice presidential candidates.

Seven is the campaign color of the administration standard-bearer Gilbert Teodoro, and yellow, of the Liberal Party's main man, Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

Pink is associated with Jejomar Binay's incumbency preference in the MMDA and now the running mate of Bagumbayan standard-bearer Sen. Richard Gordon.

Fears

While Inciong's announcement drew cheers from a number of MMDA personnel, others were not similarly enthused.

"Why does he have to impose such a directive?" a female employee asked.

"We've already solved the problem of fairer here with the implementation of a uniform for personnel," the female employee said as her coworkers nodded in agreement.

Two certain that confuses the uniform. The fairer will be look fairer in the navy blue uniform, and then he looks different anything yellow. Isn't help but think this is politically motivated," she said, adding:

"He shouldn't be identifying colors with politics. Maybe he shouldn't be ordering our uniforms and he color to politics."

Yet another employee said fans from "should not impose" the color of the clothes they should wear.

In another department, a number of employees hunting the vacuum cleaners of the MMDA were observed wearing civilian clothes. A coworker said it made her feel that she was not "in an office anymore."

Favoring a candidate

Guillermo provide a semblance of unity and formality because they are a government agency, the pointed out.

"How it would also be hard to catch employees out in their civilian clothes? Would you be trying to chase who went elsewhere during working hours.

A male employee, on the other hand, said he found it hard not to relate Inciong's move to politics.

"It's like he's covering up the progress of BF (Bayani Fernando). One day, people might forget BF's legacy," the employee said. "It's obvious that Inciong is favoring one candidate."

Last week, the MMDA commander flew his organizing the old house of Sen. Manuel Villar, the Nacionalista Party standard-bearer, in green. Villar's campaign color is orange.

But agency officials said the project was implemented over a year ago, and that other houses in that area in Tondo had been repainted as well.

Official color

But Inciong told the Inquirer that the change in the MMDA color was plain "coincidence."

"You know, we have not met the agency's "official color" was now green.

On the purported ban on the color yellow, Inciong denied imposing it.

He said that when he was a Boy Scout decades back, he ardently supported the detained Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., Aquino's martyred father.

"I was offered to be part of the 'team of lawyers representing him," Inciong said. "When Cory (Aquino's mother) passed away, with President Ramos and Jimmy Laurel and Raul Lambino and Quezon City mayor Lambino Aruta to assassin—to the agency's flag ceremony, Inciong said income could control the Manila water.

"In fact, we have scheduled [the attendance of opposition's vice presidential candidate] Mayor Jejomar Binay and former MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando," he said.

No bail for 25 cops charged in shoot-out

From page A1

Also charged were Chief Inspectors Lawrence Cajipe, Joel Morchera and Gerardo Tolentino; Senior Officers 2 Julius Marasigan Jr and Fernando Paz Gapay; Police Officers 2 Eduardo Ebinez and Edwin Antonio; and PO1 Asaf Bap Lucero, all belonging to the PNP-Highway Patrol Group (PNP) Task Force Lambat.

The policemen engaged suspected members of a robbery gang in a five-light involved Dacuycuy, Rabilloto, PC Wost Service Road, on Dec. 5, 2008. (See What Were Before on this page.)

Marisma gave evidence to the testimony of witnesses Hilario Chan Bolinao and Ronald Gorilla, stating their accounts were "more than sufficient to establish probable cause and warrant the indictments of the respondents from IAD and HPG for the crimes charged."

Witness account

Bolinao testified that he were and his daughter were not killed during the shoot-out.

He said there was no exchange of gunfire as the policemen were in complete control of the area where the two were killed.

Gorilla backed Bolinao's account that the latter's stated the latter Crescential than Dec. 5 were driving, but his daughter who was seated in front.

Gorilla recounted that when De Vera alighted from the van to take his daughter out, some of the policemen followed him and shot him in the head.

Marisma noted that 60 bullets were pumped into the victim's vehicle, indicating that many policemen participated in the shooting.

"It is without an iota of doubt that respondent policemen from the IAF were seen by the two witnesses firing at the (Crescential) vehicle of the De Veras, that they shot their hostile," they, and there there was no exchange of fire," he said.

Bazaol cleared

But rather summarily shooting the two although "there was no direct aggression hurled on them, and without first ascertaining their identities, as a consequence of which Liz died, and his shooting an unarmed defenseless and unarmed civilian in the presence of his de Vera, who evidently tried to secure Liz to a safe place, respondents from the IAF and HPG are liable for murder, qualified by the abuse of superior strength," Marisma added.

The prosecutor, however, cleared now-retired Deputy Director Leopoldo Bataol, then head of the Directorate for Integrated Police Operations Northern Luzon; IAF head Chief Supt. Leonardo Santiago Jr.; and Task Force Lambat head Chief Supt. Herbert Pelad.

Although the three police officials participated in the pre-operations briefing against the Pinoy-Pinoy robbery gang at San Simfonio, there was no proof that they actualized or participated in committing the crime, Marisma said.

WHAT WENT BEFORE

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights (CHR) has found that police officers committed multiple violations of human rights in a supposed shoot-out with suspected robbers in Pandacan City in 2008 that left six civilians, including a 7-year-old child, dead.

In a resolution dated Jan. 5, the CHR recommended the filing of charges against 26 officers of the Philippine National Police and the termination of policy reforms in the PNP to prevent a repeat of the killings.

The CHR said "basic rights were ignored" on the night of Dec. 5, 2008, "not because the civilians in the area were mistaken for criminals by the police" but because "they were presumed to be criminals."

On that night, suspected members of the Pinoy Pinoy and Ocampo gangs engaged policemen in a shoot-out inside a subdivision in Pandacan.

At the end of the 40-minute gun battle, 16 people lay dead, including 13 alleged robbers and six civilians.

Then Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataol, who headed the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), described the encounter as the "bloodiest fire fight between the police and criminal elements in Metro Manila."

Father and daughter

Among the civilians killed were 21-year-old Alfonso de Vera and his 7-year-old daughter Liz Alana. Witnesses said the De Veras were killed by agents who apparently mistook their boat. Crescential for one of the getaway cars of the suspected robbers.

Initial findings showed that about 90 bullets hit the De Veras and their vehicle.

The other civilians killed were Bernard Sinrah, Jonery Viernayse and Ariel Macalalad.

Operatives of the PNP Highway Patrol Group (HPG), PNP Special Action Force, NCRPO and Southern Police District were sent to the United Pandacan Subdivision 4 following a tip that a warehouse of Southern Transport Co. in the subdivision would be robbed.

No blockades

On Dec. 11, 2008, the National Police Commission (Napolcom) said the PNP violated the rules of engagement when it failed to record blockades that would have protected civilians from an unanticipated shoot-out.

The Napolcom also noted there was no ambulance on standby to attend to those who would be hurt.

On Feb. 17, 2009, the CHR, which was conducting a separate probe, threatened to cite in contempt 22 HPG members for failing to attend a public hearing on the shoot-out.

Two days later, the PNP Internal Affairs Service (IAS) charged nine HPG members with grave misconduct and neglect of duty and eight others with dishonesty for giving false testimony.

PO1 Robert Cabuyao was charged with grave misconduct and dishonesty after it was discovered that a bullet recovered near the slain De Vera's head was fired from Cabuyao's 45-cal. pistol.

Cabuyao had told the IAS that the two were 2 kilometers away from De Vera's vehicle at the time of the shoot-out.

On April 3, 2009, the policemen charged by the IAS appeared at a CHR public hearing but invoked their right to remain silent. Inquirer Research

Source: Inquirer Archives

Bullets examined

The ballistic examination report of the Southern Police District (SPD), according to Bolinao, contradicted the claim of the accused.

Widow's complaint

The charges against the policemen stemmed from the complaint filed by De Vera's wife, Lilian, who accused the policemen of violating the PNP rules of engagement that led to the death of her husband and daughter.

She claimed that the policemen were out during off the area in an attempt to block a group of robbers who engaged policemen in a running gun battle on Buenaventura Avenue in United Pandacan Subdivision 4.

The policemen, according to Lilian, might have mistaken their van, with Plate No. RFM-317, for one of the getaway cars of the suspects. She said her husband and daughter were on their way to pick her up in Pasay City as they had agreed to have a late snack together.

RP calls Burma's election a farce without Suu Kyi

From page A1

sure of each other.

The United States and Britain expressed disappointment and regret at the junta's latest move. Analysts called it a clear slap in the face for the international community which has repeatedly said the elections would not be legitimate if the detained Nobel Peace Prize laureate is banned from running.

The 64-year-old Suu Kyi is the head of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), which won a landslide victory in the last elections in 1990. The junta ignored those results and has kept Suu Kyi locked in under house arrest for 14 of the past 20 years.

The new Political Parties Registration Law could also leave Suu Kyi out of her opposition party. It instructs parties to expel members who are "not in conformity with the qualifications to be members of a party."

Show of flexibility

Hours after announcing the blow to the opposition party, the junta offered a carrot.

On Wednesday evening, authorities began to release several NLD officers in Rangoon, also called Yangon, by removing evil man than had been sealed over their locks since 2003 in restrict party activities, said Kyaw Win, the party spokesperson.

"Maybe they want to show some flexibility," Kyaw Win said, noting that the move seemed tied to another provision of the election law that says existing political parties have 60 days from Monday to register. The junta currently recognizes 18 parties.

The junta enacted the election-related laws on Monday that set out the rules for the election, campaigning and conditions under which parties may participate.

So far, the junta has made two of the laws public. The first stipulates that the junta will appoint a five-member Election Commission, which has final say over the poll's results.

US Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said the laws included on his were disappointing.

Suu Kyi should be released from house arrest so she can "play an active role in the political life of the country going forward," Campbell said during a trip to Malaysia.

Killing mosquito with machine gun

It already was widely assumed that Suu Kyi would be shut out of upcoming elections, which critics have denounced as a sham designed to perpetuate military rule.

A provision in the 2008 constitution, drafted under the junta's influence withdrew rights from the country's convicts, effectively bars Suu Kyi from taking part in the polls because she was married to a foreigner. Her now-deceased husband was British.

In August last year, Suu Kyi was convicted of violating the terms of her house arrest by briefly sheltering an American who swam uninvited to her lakeside residence.

She was sentenced to an extended 18 months of house arrest, which would keep her locked away during elections. Last month, the Supreme Court dismissed her latest appeal for freedom.

"They've used so many devices. It's like using a machinegun to kill a mosquito," said Aung Naing Oo, an expert on Burma at Australia's Macquarie University.

"So many of us suspected this exercise belonging any real change in Burma, but it is surprising how nakedly they're going about it."

Final nail in coffin

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy called the election law unfair, pointedly motivated and designed to exclude activities of the party, which has already been battered by arrests and harassment.

The date of the elections has not been announced, and Suu Kyi's party has not said whether it will contest the ballot.

"We're going to need to study the election laws carefully once they've all been released," British Ambassador Andrew Heyn said. "But it's regrettable and very disappointing that the laws are not based on a dialogue with a range of political opinions."

"That is the final nail in the coffin for the credibility of the elections," the activist group Burma Campaign UK said.

Dictatorship

"They won't be free and fair, and even if they were, the new constitution guarantees continued dictatorship anyway. The entire process is a sham."

The group called on the UN Security Council to reinforce its demand for genuine reform by passing a binding resolution and threatening an arms embargo.

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Slim: Businessmen can't be Santa Clauses

MEXICO CITY—CARLOS SLIM, the world's richest man, first showed a talent for business as a 10-year-old kid when he lifted his pockets with poor-selling drinks and snacks to his family.

As a youngster, he also kept painstaking ledgers of what he earned and spent and bought a governmental savings bond from which he learned valuable lessons about compound interest.

More than half a century later, Slim has topped the list of the world's richest people.

Slim has become involved in combating poverty, illiteracy and poor healthcare in Latin America, but has never wasted plans on give dribbles of his wealth to charity, like Microsoft founder Bill Gates or fellow billionaire Warren Buffett.

Businessmen, he says, do more good by creating jobs and wealth through investments, "not by being nice to Christ."

His business empire includes some of Mexico's best-known department stores, its biggest telco operator, hotels, real estate, oil drilling, building firms and Mexican funds—making it hard to go a day in Mexico without enjoying him some money.

SLIM: Taken for business as passe now

Midas touch

Cigar-smoking Slim's trademark is his "Midas" touch, acquiring struggling firms and turning them into cash cows.

In 2008, he bought a relatively small in The New York Times as the company he Slim, who says he has no interest in leaving it to his media barons.

Slim learned his first business lessons from his father, a Lebanese immigrant who came to Mexico at the early 1900s, opened a general store and bought properties cheap during the Mexican Revolution.

'No evil lasts 100 years'

In 1907, when stocks nosedived, Slim saw opportunities where others stared dismay, putting aspirations pitted diners and selling when they recovered.

"We know that crises are always temporary and there is no real bad luck. The worst times, there is always an overshoot," Slim once said. "When there is a crisis that provokes an adjustment, an overreaction comes along and things get undervalued."

Slim's enormous wealth stands acutely against his frugal lifestyle. He has lived in the same house for 40 years and drives an aging Mercedes-Benz, although it is armored and worked by bodyguards.

He eschews private jets, yachts and other luxuries popular among Mexico's elite.

After graduating engineering, Slim founded a real estate company and worked as a trader on the Mexican stock exchange.

His wealth growing, he began his trademark habit of buying failing businesses.

By 1990s, Slim had built the fortune he used with partners to buy Telmex and launch his telecoms empire. America Movil now has 201 million customers from Brazil to the United States.

Reuters

RP's Sy, Tan in Forbes list of billionaires led by Carlos Slim

From page A1

The 70-year-old Slim amassed a $53.5-billion fortune.

The 2010 Forbes list has 1,011 billionaires.

$4.2B for Sy

With their net worth swelling to $4.2 billion, the Sys were 201st on the list, up from 254th last year, when their net worth was at $2.7 billion.

The Sys are at the helm of the SM conglomerate's largest unit, debut SM, which has 28 malls nationwide, and Banco de Oro Unibank, BDO. Investment, the family's listed holding company has expanded into gaming and is set to open a "Las Vegas-style casino complex" near Manila Bay this year.

Tan and his family slipped to 183rd this year, from 122nd last year, even as their net worth increased to $1.7 billion, from $1.45 billion in 2009.

Tan owns the Philippines' largest cigarette maker Fortune Tobacco, Asia Brewery and Philippine Airlines, as well as mines and banks. He also owns real estate in Hong Kong.

The Sys and the Tans were also the only Filipinos to make it to the 2009 and 2008 Forbes list of the world's billionaires. In 2007, the family of Jaime Zobel de Ayala was ranked 349th with a net worth of $2.6 billion.

Slim's philosophy

The son of Slim, an immigrant shopkeeper's son who has bought a $250-million stake in The New York Times, is part of an increased presence on the list of billionaires from emerging economies, said Forbes' reporter Kerry Dolan.

Slim's net worth surged in the past year as his cell phone holdings rebounded in value. He is the first non-citizen on top the list since 1994.

Speaking to reporters in 2005, Slim described his philosophy.

"Wealth must be seen as a responsibility, not as a privilege. The responsibility is to create more wealth. It's like having an orchard: you have to give away the fruit, but not the trees," he said.

Arturo Elias Ayub, an executive at Slim's Telmex telephone company and the billionaire's son-in-law, expressed satisfaction that a Mexican businessman was now at the top of the list.

No champagne

But Slim is not breaking out the champagne.

"This is a number brought out by a magazine that doesn't care one iota, or worry, on." Elias Ayub said, echoing Slim's 2007 comment about the top spot that had eluded him for years: a feminist phrase—"not or impossible"—that roughly translates as "I'm impervious to that."

Slim is known for investing sure, passive gains and rarely using the companies his companies sell, preferring old-style paper notebooks. A baseball fan, his indulgences are largely limited to cigars and duct soft drinks.

Outside he owns—either personally or through his foundations and companies—an impressive collection of art, he wants out of a set of economic and other societal exposure. Extreme poverty—defined as not having money to buy enough food—affected 19.5 million people here in 2008.

In that landscape, Slim's $53.5-billion fortune has drawn frequent attention.

"This is shameful," said Puerta City resident Ernesto Villanueva, 48. "This is part of what is wrong with the Mexican political system and the corruption at the center of power, that allows those to be a few individuals to have so much."

Slim's world

Slim's conglomerates of retail, telco, manufacturing and construction companies so dominate the Mexican economy that businesses have to do it Mexico just to find themselves rubbing covers a Slim-operated cellphone or a Slim-owned shopping center sweating to pay a bill to a Slim-owned company or a Slim-owned bank.

If the line is too long, they can catch a quick coffee at a Slim-owned restaurant.

Slim's Telmex company, which controls 63 percent of land phone lines in Mexico is also the leading Internet service provider. Another of his firms is the leading cell phone operator and he wants to get into cable, wireless services to offer television and interactive media.

He also owns the Sears and Saks retail chains operating in Mexico.

Dog-eat-dog system

After being for almost two decades in the shadow of Slim, some Mexicans say his wealth is understandable—and perhaps inevitable—and growth of Mexico's lopsided, dog-eat-dog economic system.

"He was intelligent enough to get to where he is, whether we, as people, have systems that protect consumers," said Slim, if his mother himself humbled. "We are always looking out for ourselves."

Reuters from AP Reuters and Inquirer Research

Top 20 richest people

Here are the 20 wealthiest, as reviewed and by Bloomberg by Forbes magazine, in no particular order of the world's billionaires:

1.	Carlos Slim Helu and family	Mexico	Telecom
2.	Bill Gates	US	Microsoft
3.	Warren Buffett	US	Berkshire Hathaway
4.	Mukesh Ambani	India	Oil, gas
5.	Lakshmi Mittal	India	Steel
6.	Lawrence Ellison	US	Oracle
7.	Bernard Arnault	France	LVMH luxury goods
8.	Eike Batista	Brazil	Mining, oil
9.	Liliane Bettencourt	France	L'Oréal cosmetics
10.	Karl Albrecht	Germany	Supermarkets
11.	Ingvar Kamprad and family	Sweden	Ikea
12.	Charles Koch and family	US	Koch Industries
13.	Jim Walton	US	Walmart
14.	Alice Walton	US	Walmart
15.	Christy Walton and family	US	Walmart
16.	Michael Dell	US	Dell Computer
17.	Li Ka-shing	Hong Kong	Diversified
18.	Amancio Ortega	Spain	Zara clothing
19.	Theo Albrecht	Germany	Supermarkets
20.	Mark Zuckerberg	US	Facebook

(2)

Comelec now says it can print 50 million ballots on time

From page A1

to see to it that the received number of ballots was printed and shipped out well before the first nationwide election polling.

"We will not print manual ballots," he said, referring to a proposal to print 15 million of them.

The number corresponds to 10 percent of the anticipated number of voters that could be affected under a contingency plan for a hybrid balloting in case of a glitch in the automated system.

Lanzanilla said the Comelec was "doing its best" to print the required 50.7 million ballots in time for delivery to the provinces.

The Comelec is scheduled to send the ballots and other election paraphernalia to the various regional hospitals April 10.

To ensure that all ballots would be printed by April 25, Lanzanilla said that Smartmatic-TIM Corp., the Comelec's automated election supplier, will lease a fifth machine and install it at the NPO to increase production.

The company also deployed 120 technicians to maximize the machines and ensure that they are operating at their maximum capacity.

'Impossible'

Lanzanilla Amores-Lubis, head of the Comelec committee for ballot printing, had proposed contingency measures after it decided that the NPO's four machines were not capable of producing 50 million ballots by the deadline.

She noted in a memo that as of March 1, some 7.9 million ballots for the electronic ballots.

Of this number, 5.3 million were accepted as "good ballots," while the rest have yet to be checked.

Counting that 7,070,400 (printed minus spoiled/misspelled ballots) are all good ballots, we still have a total of 42,545,254 for a period of 54 days. This means, we should be able to have a daily production of 795,430,420 more or less, per day from four printers, which is impossible" the memo said.

Lanzanilla's memo proposed the loan from printers of the BSP, had increased in the past few days, reaching the 700,000-mark. On Wednesday, the four printers managed to print 400,000 ballots in 12 hours.

5th printer on April 5

With the arrival of another printer, the Comelec expects the number to increase and hit the target of at least 800,000 ballots per day.

The BPS Bonbk printer will also be on 18 days and will be operational on April 5, he said.

The election inspector's Four Bonbk Quvanbbuh Vi 4000 printers are capable of printing 8000-5000 ballots a day.

As of yesterday, the NPO had printed 13 million ballots, Lanzanilla said.

He blamed "roadblocks" by critics for the delays, adding that the legal questions and challenges against RA 9477 [the law enacted with Impeachment-Titus had pushed back the timelines for weeks.

Under the original schedule, the printing of the ballots should have started by the first week of January. The actual production only started in February.

Analysts: Rise in killings portent of RP's most violent election yet

From page A1

"It's time for us to forget the violence that has marred the past elections," Verzosa said in Pilipino.

Fear of more killings

More than 90 people have already been killed in the run-up to the national elections on May, including to the incumbent.

This includes the 57 people who were killed last Nov. 23 in Maguindanao allegedly by followers of the Ampatuans, a Muslim clan then closely allied to President Macapagal-Arroyo in order to stage out a rival political dynasty challenge. More than 30 media workers were killed in the middle of the political conflict area among those massacred.

With the political tensions still in peak, Bishop said the Philippines was on track to surpass the 139 people killed in the last presidential election in 2004 years ago, which was regarded as the most violent in recent memory.

[The Deadliest Archives: list 140 dead in the 2004 elections.]

"Based on current precedents trends we are monitoring, 2010 may see the most violent elections in recent history," Bishop said.

People kill for power

Dante Jimenez, a member of a presidential commission created to dismantle private armies following the Maguindanao massacre, offered an equally gloomy scenario.

"There are really opposition men that will not want to be a very bloody election," Jimenez said.

"People will kill each other because of interests involved. A politician's career is not that big, but it's not easy to let go of influence and power and the huge business interests that come with it. "That includes illegal activities."

Love for guns

Jimenez said the commission's focus of at least 117 so-called private armed groups run by political clans across the country.

The Ampatuans clan accused of the Maguindanao massacre allegedly had about 300 members, both the local support of a country of people traveling to the provinces to exploit other's clout to file certificates of candidacy for governor.

Analysts say the culture of political violence in the Philippines can be partly blamed on rampant gun ownership.

There are more than 1.2 million authorized firearms and 1.8 million unauthorized ones, according to police estimates. This means there is an average of roughly one gun for every three Filipinos.

'Easy as buying candy'

A small gun control law that allows civilians to own licensed firearms with special permits has perpetuated the culture of violence, according to Wendy Bethune, founder of the lobby group Gunless Society.

"Buying firearms in the Philippines is like buying candy. It's very easy. And for a certain fee, you will certainly help you possess your permit to own it by using every method of bending backgrounds," Bethune said.

Among the drivers of violence in recent months was Juan Camilo, 36, whose death is the hands of assassins on gunmen in December led your nine friend of the way politicians are killed in the Philippines.

Among the number of the Maguindanao Party (MP) running for town councilor in Buay Boats and about 40 colleagues were ambushed as they attended a Christmas gift-giving.

This other MP candidates running for local posts elsewhere in the country were also killed that same week, while a fourth was killed in January.

Verzosa's appeal

"The best measure for safety is to really have as few firearms as possible, but there really is no guarantee," said MP spokesperson Gilbert Bernabe.

"If somebody really wants to kill you, they will find a way to do so," Bernabe added.

In October City Verzosa called on religious leaders to actively participate in curtailing the bullets and ensuring credible elections in May.

"We are seeking the help of our religious leaders because we believe that they have influence on the [officials] to abhor powerful elections," Verzosa told local candidates who gathered for a peace covenant.

He said religious groups could help in the voters' education campaign and also help monitor election irregularities.

Verzosa was expected to meet with Muslim and tribal leaders and representatives of civil society groups in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Reports from AFP and Marlene Bonnevie

In the Know

A total 127 people were killed in election-related incidents from 1992 to 2007. In the same period, 604 people were wounded.

Year	Killed	Wounded
1992	72	95
1995	71	123
1998	46	127
2001	48	101
2004	140	181
2007	121	191
Total	127	604

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DID YOU KNOW

OF THE (NEPAL) family workers in the Philippines, 55 percent are women and 44 percent are men.
Cyril J. Bonalaan, Inquirer Research

RUBY ROSE MURDER CASE

Victim's spouse linked to slay

By Jeanne Rosing and Beverly T. Nadvidad

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) has ordered the filing of a parricide charge against the husband of Ruby Rose Barrameda-Jimenez, sister of actress Rochelle Barrameda.

In a 32-page resolution dated March 1 and signed by then Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera, the DOJ granted the petition for review filed by the Barrameda family, saying the statements made by the lone eyewitness in the case, Manuel Montero, about Manuel Jimenez III's involvement in his wife's killing, could not be considered hearsay.

But at the same time, Devanadera ordered the withdrawal of the criminal information for murder against one of the accused, Lope Jimenez, uncle of Manuel III.

Lope, along with Manuel III's father, Manuel Jimenez Jr., and five other persons, were charged with the death of Ruby Rose whose body was found encased in concrete inside a steel barrel which was fished out of Navotas waters last year.

She had been strangled to death.

Devanadera granted the petition for review filed by Lope's lawyer who had argued that there could not have been any conspiracy between his client and Manuel Jr. since the two had been estranged for some time before the crime was committed.

Reached for comment, Rochelle Barrameda said they would appeal the DOJ's decision and push for the inclusion of all three Jimenezes in the murder complaint.

Tiñgas sue PDEA agent for libel

By Miko Morales

RETIRED SUPREME COURT ASSOCIATE Justice Dante Tiñga and his son, Tagaig Mayor Ruffolo "Rodolfo" Tiñga, yesterday filed a libel case against a Philippine Drug

Viewers A27

2 men hurt in factory fire, explosion

By Beverly T. Hamstead and Doris C. Dumlao

AN EXPLOSION STRUCK A chemical factory in Pasig City at around 9:15 a.m. yesterday, creating a fire which left two workers injured.

The blast broke out in the main shortening plant of CHMC Inc., a chemical industries of the Philippines Inc. (Chemphil) subsidiary.

The incident happened at the Chemphil compound on Ilugin Road in Barangay Kalawaan.

The police said the fire damaged P50,000 worth of property before it was finally put out at 9:55 a.m.

Chemphil reported the incident to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) in the afternoon.

"At this time, investigation is still being conducted as to the cause of the fire, however, preliminary reports indicate an increase in any of its employees," the company told the PSE.

However, a police report said that one workers were injured in the explosion that took place in a storage room full of sodium chloride in container mill.

Case investigator Fire Officer 1st Rodolfo Grajilad identified the victims as Ildefonso Alamar and Rodrigo Mendoza.

Alamar suffered a contusion while Mendoza sustained a superficial burn on the face, he said.

The fire were initial reports that the fire was triggered by the welding activities of an outside contractor.

However, these were still being confirmed by police investigators.

CHMC is the country's pioneer and sole manufacturer of ordinated grade sodium tripolyphosphate and tetra-sodium pyrophosphates for the detergent industry.

WATCH OUT BELOW
A statue seems to be pouring water on the driver of a pedicab passing in front of a fountain at the Balara Filtration Plant in Quezon City.

Bayani bats for in-city relocation of informal settlers

By Cathy Taemsan

TYPHOON "ONDOY" HAS shown that relocation to an inferior solution to Metro Manila's informal settlers problem, according to former Metropolitan Manila Development chair Bayani Fernando.

"Many of the Ondoy flood victims live in relocation areas that are actually not habitable and are flood-prone. These people were removed from squatter areas and were just left there to settle," said Fernando, once Bagong Buhay eng presidential bet.

A former mayor of Marikina City, Fernando said he wants the government's resettlement authorities to consider in-city relocation where informal settlers are allowed to rent housing units in medium-rise structures within or near their workplaces.

"We have to consider that Metro Manila has its core economy and that the human population is its lifeblood. The policy of relocation as a means to decongest the metropolis should be reviewed," he said.

Informal settlers are usually provincial folk who move to the city to find jobs since there are no opportunities for them in their hometowns.

But since they do not have permanent addresses in the urban areas, they are forced to stay in makeshift, unpermitted houses in vacant lots and are usually vulnerable to safety hazards and crimes.

A mechanical engineer himself, Fernando said he considers danger zones as "ticking time bombs."

"Ang isang relocation dapat sa Metro Manila has its own economy and that the human population is its lifeblood. The policy of relocation as a means to decongest the metropolis should be reviewed," he said.

"Informal settlers are usually provincial folk who move to the city to find jobs since there are no opportunities for them in their hometowns.

But since they do not have permanent addresses in the urban areas, they are forced to stay in makeshift, unpermitted houses in vacant lots and are usually vulnerable to safety hazards and crimes.

A mechanical engineer himself, Fernando said he considers danger zones as "ticking time bombs."

"We have to consider that

Tiñgas sue PDEA agent

From page A16

Enforcement Agency (PDEA) agent who had accused them of persuading a judge into dismissing a drug charge against three of their alleged relatives.

The Tiñgas said in their affidavit that the allegations made by PDEA intelligence agent Jeffrey Requiero "not only besmirched the reputation of a former high-ranking official in the judiciary but [also] affected the public's perception of the Tiñgas family's integrity and standing."

They added that the timing of Requiero's accusations was "highly suspect, given its proximity to the elections."

"Our political adversaries have time and again attempted to use us for this issue despite our continued efforts against the drug menace," the Tiñgas said.

Requiero, in a Feb. 6 letter to Chief Justice Reynato Puno, sought the disbarment of Judge Raul Villanueva of the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 267 (Taguig City station) who handled the case against three men said to be related to the Tiñgas.

Requiero had acted as the poseur buyer in the drug bust which led to their arrest.

In his letter, Requiero accused the Tiñgas of pressuring Villanueva, who later dismissed the charges against the three men.

Villanueva, however, denied the allegation, saying the prosecution had failed to show proof that the three were drug pushers.

METROBRIEFS

Police identify 3 of 6 PCG men linked to rape

THE TAGUIG City police have identified three of the six Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel who allegedly raped a woman in one of the agency's facilities last week, in a report. Chief Insp. Delia Ingala, head of the Women and Children Protection Center, identified the men as PO2 Raymundo, Ace Emar and Kevin Cajoc. Senior Supt. Camilo Escobin, Taguig police chief, told the lawyers that the three were under the custody of the Coast Guard which was also conducting an investigation into the alleged rape victim's accusations. "We could not yet get hold of them because of the pending probe," he said, adding that the three officer-accused were also in the Coast Guard's custody. All six were accused by a woman of raping her after a drinking spree inside a Coast Guard station in Taguig City on March 6. She filed charges against the six men with the city prosecutor's office on March 9. **Mike Alerales**

Cop wounded in ambush declared out of danger

A POLICE official who was wounded in a roadside ambush has been declared out of danger with investigators looking at the possibility that the attack might be work-related. Chief Supt. Isidro San Diego, Davao City Police District (CDPO) director, said they had yet to talk to Supt. Napoleon Casayan who is assigned at the Philippine National Police Personnel Holding and Administration Unit in Camp Crame. "The doctors at Veterans Hospital [in Davao] are still recuperating. But Casayan [knows who's behind] the attempt on his life," San Diego said. He added that the attack might be related to the [old Casayan] feud last year on the [land] "homeowner" [dispute which resulted in the] killing of several employees said to be involved in the construction of [a housing] project. "Casayan was the one who [will visit and the SOPI] helped him. We're looking at that angle, among others," San Diego said. Casayan sustained several gunshot wounds when motorcycle-riding men fired at his Nissan Navara pickup on Wednesday afternoon in Davao City. **Julie M. Aurelio**

Fire razes nine-door apartment in QC

A NINE-DOOR apartment made was razed yesterday morning in Bascon City after an occupant allegedly played with matches. The apartment in Barangay San Antonio, Novaliches, was owned by Edwin [illegible] a month reaching the Bascon City Bureau of Fire Protection said. Arson investigators said the blaze reportedly began at a room belonging to a man identified only as Beverly who had a child. **Julie M. Aurelio**

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World's top scientists to review UN climate panel

A GROUP OF TOP SCIENTISTS from around the world will review the research and management practices of the UN climate change panel on that it can try to avoid the kinds of errors that have brought its work into question in recent months, officials said on Wednesday.

Ban Ki-moon, the secretary general of the United Nations, said that the Interacademy Council, a consortium of the world's most prestigious science academies, would name scientists to take a thorough look at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The panel has come under sharp attack after revelations of several mistakes in its most recent report, published in 2007, including a poorly sourced and exaggerated account of how quickly the Himalayan glaciers are melting.

Scientists and officials say that the panel's finding that the earth is warming—probably as a result of human activity—remains indisputable. But critics have used the errors to raise doubts about the credibility of the entire 3,000-page study.

At a news conference at the United Nations, Ban said he was requesting an independent review of the panel to ensure that future reports are comprehensive and free of errors.

"Let me be clear," he said. "The threat of climate change is real." But he said it was critical that policy makers and the public received complete and impartial scientific evidence to inform any policies for addressing it.

The chair of the climate change panel, Rajendra K. Pachauri, has also faced accusations of conflict of interest for serving as a paid board member of several profit-making energy and financial companies. The payments go to a nonprofit research center he runs in New Delhi.

In an interview, Pachauri said that he and the hundreds of scientists who contributed to the panel's reports had been relentlessly driven by the rigorous and intensity of criticism in recent months.

"We've been through a very critical period," he said. "We've learned, we've listened and we've decided to do something about it. It is important for the public agenda, for public security in issues that we're sensitive to what happened."

He acknowledged that he and other climate scientists had done a "lousy job" of communicating what is known and not known about the behavior of the earth's climate and that they had not responded adequately to critics of their work.

The review will be led by Robbert H. Dijkgraaf, a Dutch physicist and mathematician who is president of the Inter-Academy Council. The study group will be financed by the United Nations but will operate wholly independently, Dijkgraaf said at a briefing at the United Nations. AFP/MG

Young US illegals 'coming out'

CHICAGO—DANIA UNZUETA HAS KEPT A secret for more than 10 years and is finally ready to come clean. She's an illegal immigrant.

The 26-year-old University of Illinois at Chicago graduate was among dozens of young immigrants who decided to publicly "come out" about their immigration status during protests in several cities on Wednesday. They hope their stories will roll anywhere in the plight of an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants living in the US and renew calls for federal reform—even at the risk of deportation.

"It's scary on one hand, but it's also liberating," said Unzueta, of Chicago, one of eight people who shunned their immigration status at a downtown ceremony. "I feel like I've been hiding for so long."

Several hundred people—holding American flags and signs that read "Undocumented and Unafraid"—cheered as each of the eight took the microphone and vowed to continue telling others about their status.

Similar events were planned in Detroit, New York, and at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Wednesday with others in the coming weeks in Los Angeles. Some activists dubbed Wednesday a "National Coming Out Day" and quoted gay rights activist Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay elected officials, in their statements.

Experts say the public disclosure tactic is on the rise, especially among younger activists. Many have been marching, writing letters and calling legislators since the immigrant rights movement was re-energized in 2006, when more than a million people marched in cities nationwide to fight against a bill that was considered anti-immigrant.

The next step, they say, is public disclosure. Unzueta and others also hope that President Barack Obama makes good this year on his promise to tackle immigration reform, despite fierce initial attempts by lawmakers since 2006.

Each year, about 65,000 illegal immigrants graduate from US high schools, according to the New Hispanic Center, a Washington-based research group. Some researchers estimate the young adult population, those aged 18 to 24, is approximately 2.2 million.

They are in limbo. Many were brought to this country as young children by their parents and have chosen ties to US culture than to that of their native countries.

But because they're not citizens, they're living in constant fear of getting kicked out of college, of losing scholarships and not being able to apply for a job.

And without reform, there are few ways to become citizens or obtain long-term visas without significant life disruptions. Most would have to return to their native countries to apply for legal status in the US or hope that a legislative sponsors a provision of bill. AP

A CRUCIFIX adorned with handcuffs and American flags carried in a youth immigration rally on March 18 in Chicago. AP

Pakistanis who refused US screening hailed at home

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—A team of the United States arranged by the state department to improve ties in Pakistani hip observers ended to a public relations fiasco when the members of the group refused to submit to extra airport screening in Washington, and they are now being hailed as heroes on their return home.

"People should be thankful, you made them so proud," said Shazia Bibi, the host of a popular national talk show, during an interview in his studio on Tuesday with four of the six politicians, who sailed against the security precautions at Ronald Reagan National Airport.

Meetings with the Obama administration's top policymakers on Pakistan, including the president's special representative, Richard C. Holbrooke, and visits to the Pentagon and the National Security Council, did not allay the anger the politicians said they felt at being asked to submit to extraordinary screening on Sunday before boarding a flight to New Orleans. They declined to be screened and did not board the flight.

Pakistan is one of 14 mostly Muslim countries whose citizens are once more go through increased checks before they fly into the United States, a procedure mandated by the Obama administration in the wake of the failed attempt by a Nigerian man to blow up an airliner flying from the Netherlands to Detroit on Dec. 25.

The leader of the parliamentary group, Sen. Abbas Khan Afridi, said in an interview on Tuesday that before they were to board the flight for New Orleans, he and his colleagues were ushered into a room of passengers at the airport and asked to stand aside.

They were then asked to accept a full-body scan by a machine, he said. Such body-scanning units are in use at 19 airports across the United States, and more are being installed. AP/VVG

Greece paralyzed by strike over painful austerity plan

ATHENS, GREECE—GREEK PUBLIC transport ground to a halt, flights grounded and some hospitals left with emergency staff only on Thursday in workers' bid to protest general strike to protest painful spending cuts.

Debt-plagued Greece has faced a new wave of labor discontent since the Socialists government's harsh new austerity plan was introduced last month in an effort to stem its ballooning deficit and stave off the support of skeptical markets.

Under intense pressure from the European Union to quickly show fiscal improvement, the government announced an additional euro9.8 billion ($13.35 billion) in savings through public sector salary cuts, hiring and pension freezes and consumer tax hikes.

The measures, added to a previous euro11.2 billion ($15.24 billion) austerity plan, seek to reduce the country's budget deficit from 12.7 percent of annual output to 8.7 percent this year. The long-term target is to bring overspending below the EU ceiling of 3 percent of GDP in 2012.

The plan sparked a wave of strikes and protests from labor unions whose reaction is the initial austerity measures announced earlier this year had been muted. Thursday's strike, which shut down all public services and schools, left Greeks fed up at poor and unexpected all-over breakdown for the day, was the second major walkout in a week.

The government says the tough cuts are its only way to dig Greece out of a crisis that has hammered the common European currency and alarmed international markets—grossly inflating the loan dependent economy's borrowing costs.

But unions say ordinary Greeks are being called on to pay a disproportionate price for past fiscal mismanagement.

"They are trying to make workers pay the price for the crisis," said Thanos Dimopoulos, leader of Greece's largest unions, the GSEE.

"These measures will not be effective and will throw the economy into deep freeze." AP

US honors first women Air Force pilots

WASHINGTON—MORE THAN 60 years after the end of World War II, American lawmakers paid tribute on Wednesday to the pioneering but long-overlooked role played by women pilots in the US Air Force.

About 1,000 women piloted fighter planes in the United States from 1942 to 1944 when they joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots, dubbed the WASPS.

Their mission was not to go into combat but to move aircraft between bases, ferry planes which had undergone repairs and help in training. Their tasks therefore evidently freed up male pilots to participate in combat missions.

Some 38 women pilots died on the missions, and were never accorded military honors. Fewer than 300 of the women are alive today.

At the end of the war, the WASPS were not integrated into the US Air Force but instead returned to civilian life without any form of recognition for the role they played, and the program was suspended.

It was only in 1977 that the WASPS were granted veteran status.

"We acknowledge that for too long the ground service of the WASPS was not recognized in word, or indeed. As the moderator says today: 'These were no heroines, no benefits and rarely free thank you,'" House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

She was addressing a ceremony awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to some 178 women aged between 88 and 90, many accompanied by their families.

"Women Airforce Service Pilots: we are all your daughters. You taught us how to fly. We thank you for that and for what you did to fly-ing to save the honor of the home and the land of the free," Pelosi added.

It was "wonderful," said 89-year-old Lois Hath of South Carolina, who joined up when she was 22 just after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

She added the women were very surprised. "We had no idea this was coming after all these years," said Nash, who flew B26 bombers, dragging behind her a training target that other bombers would fire at to hone their skills.

"It was a running chapter in the history of WWII, the history of the air force, of the aviation and most of all in the history of America," said Bonnie Parrish, a former WASP who addressed the gathering wearing her blue uniform.

Elsie Ruegsegger, 63, said the celebration was "well overdue."

With her hand resting on a framed photo of her mother on the wings of an airplane, Ruegger described the circumstances under which young women between 18 and 20 years old joined the WASPS, at the time they struggled to deal with a shortage of pilots.

"You had to pay for the fuel to get there, the bus to go home, your uniform, your wings," she said.

But once the war was over, the women were simply expected "to go home and have babies," she added. AFP

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US solons reject Afghan pullout

WASHINGTON—THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES on Wednesday roundly delivered a resolution disapproving President Barack Obama withdraw all US forces from Afghanistan, in a key election-year test for his war strategy.

Lawmakers rejected the resolution in a 356-63 vote that saw 60 of Obama's Democratic allies and five of his Republican critics cast ballots to call home all US forces from what he has called the central front against extremism.

The measure demanded Obama pull US forces out of Afghanistan 30 days after the bill becomes law or, if he decides that is too dangerous, by no later than Dec. 31.

The measure, crafted by Democratic Representative Dennis Kucinich, enjoyed the support of Democrats on the party's left flank and some Republicans.

But Democratic Howard Berman, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, warned that a hasty withdrawal could lead to "a national security disaster" in the form of Taliban rule in Kabul and safe haven for al-Qaeda.

"We keenly aware that even if we remain in Afghanistan—and hasn't I want to emphasize this—there's no guarantee that we will prevail in our fight against al-Qaeda. But if we don't try we are guaranteed to fail," said Berman.

A January public opinion poll by CNN showed about 52 percent of the US public opposed the war and 47 percent supported it. AFP

'Lost Boys' star Corey Haim dies after apparent overdose

LOS ANGELES—COREY HAIM, a 1980's heartthrob whose '80s-'90s-period career was derailed by solid parties and drug addiction, died on Wednesday aged 38 in Los Angeles after an apparent overdose, police said.

The Canadian-born actor, as well known for his off-screen indulgences as his brief reign as a teen idol in films such as "Lucas" and "The Lost Boys," was pronounced dead at a medical center in the Los Angeles suburb of Burbank.

"It was an apparent overdose," said Los Angeles Police Department spokesperson Frank Alhanvez, adding that the drug or medication used was unknown.

Haim's mother, with whom he shared his apartment, alerted the emergency services overnight, according to assistant chief coroner Ed Winter.

"So he got out of bed, he felt a little nauseous, and he came down the floor on his knees," Winter said. "She called paramedics. They responded, transported him to the hospital, where he was pronounced (dead) at 2:15 this morning," Haim is best

COREY Haim in 1987 photo.

known for a string of film roles in the 1980s especially the 1987 Joel Schumacher vampire hit "The Lost Boys" and "Lucas" in which he appeared alongside Charlie Sheen and Winona Ryder.

The WORLD

Critic Lawrence B. Ginoco

Obama: Americans have lost faith in gov't

ST. LOUIS, Missouri—Many American have lost faith in their government, US President Barack Obama admitted on Wednesday, tackling a pervasive sentiment building his hopes for enacting sweeping reform.

American suspicion of government was deepening, he said in a speech from the heartland state of Missouri, where he pushed his redesigned health reform drive that has been derailed by Republicans in congressional takeover.

"People have lost faith in government—and they've lost faith in government before. I can (be) pretty worse," Obama said at a rally in St. Louis.

He quoted his political hero, US Civil War-era president Abraham Lincoln, as saying that the role of government was to do what needed to be done that could not be done by citizens themselves without help.

"That pretty much sums up my attitude," Obama said.

The president used the rally to roll out a plan to crack down on waste and fraud in federal health programs for the poor and senior citizens as well as other government spending, which he said amounted to billions of dollars per year.

"I'm not interested in bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake. I'm not interested in government for government's sake," Obama said, adding the plan would help cut massive long-term deficits causing a shadow over economies on every budget.

In many ways, Obama's entire political program represents a bid to show that government can work, despite mixed US sentiments about federal power and Republican claims that he wants to orchestrate a takeover of much of American life.

Obama has embarked on a fierce week-long campaign in support of his health care plan before he leaves on a trip to Indonesia and Australia on March 15.

In a bid to court Republican blocking tactics, he unveiled a House to draft legislation it approved in November and gave the Senate's version of health care reform, unpalatable "fixes" to that bill.

But the approach is high-risk as some conservative Democrats oppose it and others have a wary eye on the polls, with a third of senators and all of the House of Representatives up for re-election in November's midterm elections. AFP

US PRESIDENT Barack Obama speaks at a fundraising reception for US Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) in St. Louis, Missouri, March 11, 2010. AFP/JIM WATSON

'Half of my letters tell me I'm an idiot'

WASHINGTON—US President Barack Obama joked on Wednesday that half of the 40,000 letters that pour into the White House each day "tell me I'm an idiot." Engaging in shock, the president remarked that his staff did not open him this month of his correspondents—selecting a representative portion of 10 letters for him to read when he returns to the White House sometime at night.

"I will tell you, that my staff is very conscientious. Because only one half of these letters tell me I'm an idiot!" Obama said, chuckling at his own joke during a rally in Saint Louis, Missouri.

The president went on to make a serious point, saying that many senior citizens wrote to him to tell him to keep the government's hands off Medicare, a health plan for elderly people.

He said he wrote back to these people to point out that Medicare is in fact a federally administered program.

Obama frequently mentions the flood of letters that make it to the White House every day, and has said those selected for him to read help him to penetrate the presidential "bubble" and connect with regular Americans. AFP

US 'JihadJane' linked to plot to kill Muhammad cartoonist

WASHINGTON—A 46-year-old woman who called herself JihadJane was tied on Tuesday to an alleged assassination plot against a Swedish cartoonist who depicted the Prophet Muhammad atop the body of a dog.

As an indictment unsealed Tuesday federal prosecutors accused Colleen R. LaRose, an American from the suburbs of Philadelphia, of linking up through the Internet with militants overseas and plotting to carry out a murder.

LaRose, 46, was arrested in Philadelphia in October, but her case only leapt under seal. Although the indictment does not identify the target, a law enforcement official said her case was linked to the arrests November of seven Muslims in Ireland on suspicion they were plotting to kill the cartoonist, Lars Vilks. A group linked to al-Qaida had put a $100,000 bounty on his head for the cartoon, which the group presented as an insult to Islam.

European news reports said Irish police, who arrested the boy just said that seven women in Cork and Waterford, had coordinated the operation with the United States.

LaRose is one of just a handful of women charged in the United States with terrorism offenses in recent years. Michael L. Levy, the US attorney for Eastern Pennsylvania, said in a statement the case illustrated how narrative were looking for American recruits who could blend in. "It shatters any lingering thought that we can spot a terrorist based on appearance," he said.

LaRose is white, with blond hair and green eyes, according to the law enforcement official.

The indictment said that in mid-2009, LaRose, using the aliases JihadJane and Fatima LaRose, began posting on "JihadJane" videos and other messages about her desire to help Muslims. By early 2009, the court papers said, she was exchanging e-mail messages with individuals in conspiracies in Southeast Asia and Europe and expressed a desire to become a martyr for an Islamic cause. REUTERS

Pope denounces 'atrocious' Nigeria bloodshed

JOS, NIGERIA—POPE BENEDICT XVI on Wednesday denounced the "atrocious" bloodshed in Nigeria after a massacre of Christian villagers, in police said 49 people would be charged over the killings.

As new graffiti added to the tensions around the Kadoguna city of Jos, the head of the Roman Catholic Church added his voice to a chorus of international revulsion over the weekend slaughter which police now say left 109 people dead.

About 8,000 Nigerians have also fled their homes around Jos after the violence, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

In his weekly general audience, the pope offered condolences to the victims of the "atrocious violence causing bloodshed in Nigeria" and urged civil and religious leaders to "make every effort to worship and peaceful coexistence."

"Violence does not resolve conflicts but only increases the tragic consequences," he added.

The three-day killing spree sees Sunday was the latest wave of violence to engulf the Jos region where several hundred people were killed in Muslim-Christian clashes in January.

The security forces have faced heavy criticism over their failure to intervene to stop the latest killings or a time when a curfew was enacted to be in force.

Although troop reinforcements have been deployed, state governor Jonah Jang said security forces had restrained the carnage.

Jang, a former senior air force officer, told reporters in Jos: "Nigeria's army cannot murder other reports of movement around the area and had been told that troops would be brought in to help.

"There have not been any, I was woken by a call that they (armed gangs) had started burning the village and people searching hacked to death.

But in a barren market Wednesday, the area bootprints, machetes, the area bootprints, machetes, the area bootprints, machetes

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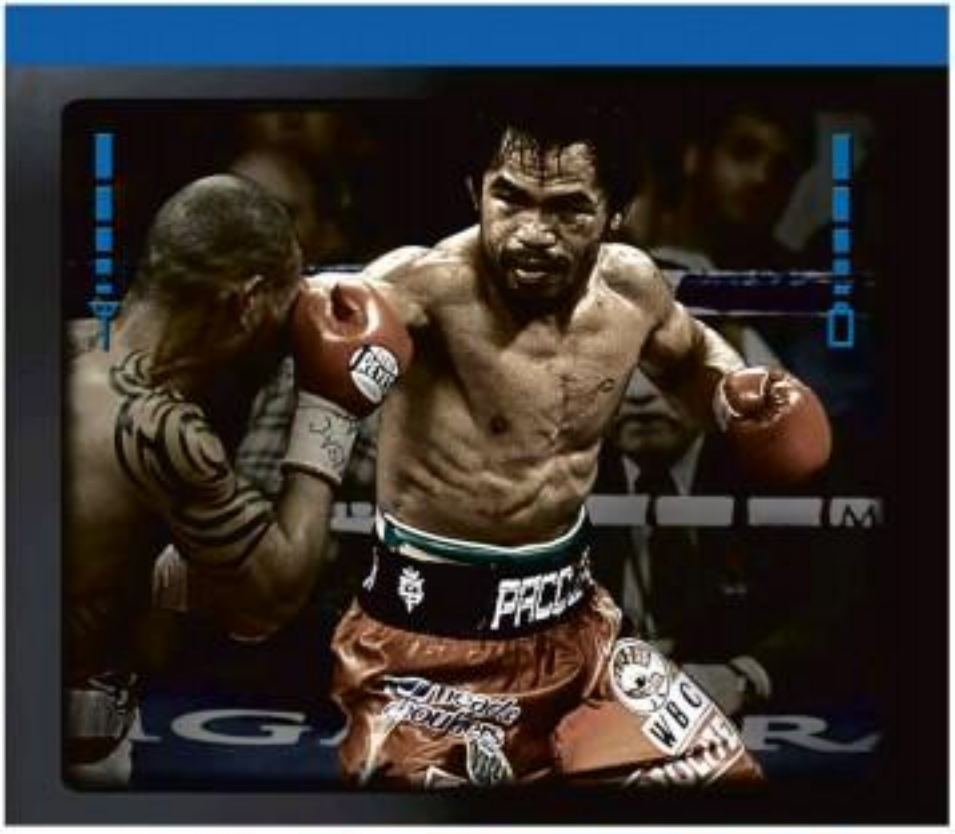

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SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Chiaw

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BATTLEGROUND BEAUTIES Filipino-ring superstar Manny Pacquiao and Jessica Chrisley are flanked by Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders during a news conference at the sparkling Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, Wednesday. Pacquiao and Chrisley square off in a welterweight bout at the stadium this Saturday (Sunday in Manila). —

No prefight fireworks for Manny, Clottey A32

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Clottey belittles Manny's punching power

By Roy Luarca

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS—JOSHUA CLOTTEY says he holds little fear of Manny Pacquiao's punching power.

The Ghanaian is even willing to take a few Pacquiao hits to find out what's in store for him when they collide on March 13.

And if Pacquiao's punches don't hurt, Clottey swears the Filipino superstar will be in trouble. The Ghanaian could be well on after Pacquiao and Clottey absorb a few that will rattle the pound-for-pound king and put his World Boxing Organization welterweight title defense in jeopardy.

"Pacquiao throws more than a thousand punches and I'll block most of them," Clottey said during yesterday's press conference at the $12.2-billion Cowboys Stadium here Wednesday.

"I only throw a few, but those punches will land and those punches will hurt."

Knowing that Pacquiao started fighting at 108 pounds, Clottey, a naturally big 147-pounder, said he can impose his strength on Pacquiao.

Clottey claimed that he has not seen Pacquiao's fight tapes, adding all that he knows about the Filipino is his speed, footwork, the left hook and right hook.

"Apart from that, nothing," said Clottey, who boasts a 2-inch height and 3 ½-inch reach advantage over Pacquiao. "I don't watch his tape. I never watch his tape. The only thing I know is those deadly run-ins."

The 33-year-old Clottey feels good about being ranked a 5-1 underdog and is motivated to do well on fight night.

He added that he's happy and proud to be given the opportunity to fight the world No. 1, and he his country's greatest fighter ever.

Ghana's honors locates include Hall of Famer Azumah Nelson and former world champions Ike Quartey, Joseph Agbeko, David Kotei and Alfred Kotey.

"I mix the whole. I'm the greatest one," he said, stating that Nelson lost to Bernal Whitaker and Quartey lost to Oscar De La Hoya.

Although he admires Pacquiao for what he has done to Filipino fighters, Clottey said he will do everything in his power to topple the world's only seven-division champion in as many divisions.

"When we climb the ring, its business," said Clottey. "But after the fight are could be friends again."

No prefight 'bombs' for The Event

By Roy Luarca

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS—THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE FIERCE RIVALS, but Manny Pacquiao and Joshua Clottey appeared more like friends when they met at the final press conference of The Event at the convention $1.2-billion Cowboys Stadium here Wednesday.

Pacquiao and Clottey stood up from their corners, headed for the center of the stage, exchanged glances and then smiled at each other.

They were still smiling when they stood up side by side and back to back for the swarm of photographers angling for best shots during the photo session.

Pacquiao, who was accompanied by the Dallas Cowgirls, was his old jokester self, swiveling trash talk and refusing to belittle his foe and flaunt his prejudice.

Clottey who will try to arrest Pacquiao's World Boxing Organization welterweight crown Saturday (Sunday in Manila), was impressed by the Filipino's warmth and humility and reeled up as an admirer.

Pacquiao, a ferocious attacker, merely promised to give fans a great fight while Clottey, a durable defender, vowed a performance of his life.

Meanwhile, billionaire Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys and the sparkling new stadium that can sit 100,000 fans, was satisfied with his record-setting event in boxing promotion.

Jones and co-promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank are hoping for a sellout crowd of 45,000, which is more than double the 16,276 fans Pacquiao drew when he stopped Irish Micahel at the end of their fight trilogy in 2006.

The experiment during the preseason semi-WBO presidents Ignacio Beaz-Cortes and HBC-PPV head Mark Taffet.

Mayard, who gave Jones a plaque of appreciation for helping the sport, said Pacquiao is in for a tough battle as Clottey has never been stopped in compiling a 35-win, 3-loss slate laced with 21 knockouts.

Taffet tagged Pacquiao as the PPV superstar after his last three fights posted more than a million buy-each.

Pacquiao (50-3-2 with 38 KOs) remains the heavy favorite. He is riding an 11-game winning streak, the last four coming by knockout over former WBC lightweight titlist David Diaz, former Hall of Famer Oscar De La Hoya, British pride Ricky Hatton and Puerto Rican Miguel Cotto, who hosted Clottey by split decision last year.

Four-time Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach earlier predicted a knockout win for Pacquiao either in the ninth or tenth rounds.

Lenny Dubosa, a former Pacquiao stalemate who now handles Clottey said the Ghanaian challenger has a 70 percent chance of dethroning Pacquiao.

FRIEND OR FOE Manny Pacquiao and Joshua Clottey pose for photographers at the controversial press conference for the fight at Cowboys Stadium.

Horde of US celebs expected to watch fight

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS—LOOK WHO'S coming to watch the Manny Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey title fight at the Cowboys Stadium on March 13.

Dana White, the president of pyrotechnical boxing's buxiest rival Ultimate Fighting Championship, so has.

The 50-year-old White announced on his Twitter account that he's coming to watch Pacquiao defend his WBO welterweight crown against Clottey.

White picked Pacquiao to win by knockout in the eighth round.

A horde of celebrities, politicians, sports officials and actors are also expected to troop to Arlington City for the fight.

Actors like superstars Steven Segal, Anne Claude Van Damme, actors Mark Wahlberg, Denzel Washington, Robert Duvall, Lou Diamond Phillips, NBA star Ron Artest and baseball's Derek Jeter are among those who have visited Pacquiao during training.

Former US President Bill Clinton is also a big Pacquiao fan. Another former US president, George Bush Jr., is said to be keen on watching the bout.

GMA launches new PSC-DOH project today

By Jane Manaore

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WILL be the guest of honor at the launch of a joint project between the Philippine Sports Commission and the Department of Health at the new boxing gym inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex today.

PSC chair Harry Angping said the President is expected at 1 p.m. to launch the project, which promises wellness and the use of powder machines.

Angping said Ms Arroyo will also check out the other facilities inside the decades-old RMSC, including the renovated gymnasium annex and POC building.

Aside from the construction of a sports mall on the Arlenter side of the complex, repairs are being done on the swimming pool at the Philsports Arena and the diving area of the RMSC.

"It's been 25 years now since the two pools and the diving area were repaired," said Angping. "I think it's about time to renovate it."

The renovated RP survey in China for trade also said that the PSC generated almost P1 million from the rental of the venues inside the RMSC and the Philsports Arena last month.

San Mig Coffee five rolls No. 6

SAN MIG COFFEE PLUCKED ITS SIXTH straight victory with a 77-71 decision over 8-MER tonight recently in the Nokia National Basketball Association (NBA) at Puerto Princesa City.

Francis Vergara and Marlon Pascual had 16 and 15, respectively, while John Ochoa had nine to the under-10 tournament backed by Nokia Philippines and DAI Corporation.

Vergara hurled 3-MEGA-3-3s with 14 points followed Angelo Asero and Nestor Barbasan with nine apiece.

Youth For Change-UC beat Health Solutions Lyn Wiles, 82-79, for a 4-1 record while dropping their eighth loss in 5 outings.

Ace Cuna Antipolo teamed Barrington Mason, 86-81, for a second win in six games.

Pacquiao will fire from all angles

IN PREPARATION FOR THE EVENT ON SUNday (Saturday night in Dallas), I'm sure you have at least watched the Miguel Cotto-Joshua Clottey fight highlights on the net. Cyberspace is a virtual repository of information with fight stats and shorter runs of old bouts available through different sites.

You wanted to know Cotto's title bouts and he did run a. If Manny Pacquiao will have a tough fight because Clottey's a big natural welterweight; b. If speed will win the fight for the Pacman then Clottey liked to set up before he throws anything.

Cotto won on a split decision, although Clottey's fierce campaign in the later rounds left the Puerto Rican with cuts and bruises.

Manny can it wins a controversial split, but a W is a W in boxing and decisions are hardly ever overturned in the fight game.

* * *

But let's get back to our two questions.

Clottey is a plodding, calculating fighter, not easily fazed by the counterpunch tedium of a fight. He does have size, but don't sell that to Pacquiao who has made fighting and winning against big guys a career habit.

Oscar De La Hoya and Cotto were both run down by Pacquiao's unrelenting five-pronged assault on opponents from a variety of angles.

Which answers our second concern: because of his outward power to both fists that flet in blinding speed, Pacquiao will say Clottey from mid-again.

Pacquiao victim David Diaz said that he could not see the punches coming and when they did hit, it was like being assaulted by a truck.

Again, we say that no matter what Pacquiao's opponent will do in training to prepare or absorb Pacman's power, it's altogether a different matter when the Pacquiao punch.

ONE GAME AT A TIME

See Sarmenta

as usually connect in the ring.

* * *

Even if Clottey survives and keeps Pacquiao his opponent of not being knocked out, there will be just too many punches to contend with.

He is facing a Pacquiao who is at the peak of his skills, who no longer simply looks for the KO knowing that Pacquiao has the power. Unless true gradually perfects the opponents.

Clottey nevertheless, has no chance.

He is the unlikely hero challenging Pacquiao for his welterweight title.

Besides our prediction that Clottey would be brave hearts in the bulldog going into the fight, he has remained virtually unbeatable.

He's not a caliber seen for a few classic bouts against Freddie Roach and about sending Pacquiao to the hospital after the fight.

Maybe, just maybe, a huge Clottey punch could end Pacquiao and change the fight completely. His relative inexperience might be his strongest asset, in the sense that Pacquiao cannot try Texas shooter a dynamite ago as posed Marco Antonio Barrera in one of boxing's most stunning upsets.

But again, Clottey is no Pacquiao. He'll have to set together that shot and by then, Pacquiao would already have an advantage of at least three pounds to use to every exchange.

Road warrior Grizz thrash Boston Celts

BOSTON—THE MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES HATCHED A TEAM-record seventh straight road win by thrashing the Boston Celtics 111-95 on Wednesday's NBA action.

Rudy Gay scored 28 points and O.J. Mayo added 17 to lead Memphis to its third victory over the Celtics in seven days since 2008.

Ray Allen and Kevin Garnett scored 17 points apiece for the Celtics, who suffered their equal heaviest defeat of the season.

Other games: Oklahoma 98, New Orleans 93; Utah 115, Detroit 109; San Antonio 91, New York 89; Milwaukee 108, LA Clippers 87; Denver 118, Minnesota 103; Charlotte 120, Philadelphia 97; Sacramento 113, Toronto 85; Dallas 96, New Jersey 87. AP

Alcantara, Patrombon reach Thailand q'finals

FILIPINO PRODIGY CHRIS ALCANTARA AND Jessie Patrombon clipped past their respective rivals yesterday to reach the quarterfinals of the Asian U BWORLD junior boxing championships in Nonthaburi, Thailand.

Alcantara, hold of the 2009 Australian Open junior doubles champion pole, outlasted Australia's James Svabonis, 4-0, 3-1, 4-1, while Patrombon continued his string of upsets by battling his 12-bomber Thanh of Australia, 4-2, 4-3.

Playing on the opposite side of the draw, the Filipino youngsters can hope to all-RP finals if they win their next two matches.

"We have a long and tiring circuit but this is what it takes to become tough," wrote Patrombon's coach Ednaldo Tolentino in e-mail.

It was a big triumph for Patrombon, the 17-year-old cyclist of Bigan City who added the world No. 30 junior player to his list of victims here. He also brought down 14th seed Antonio Campbell Johnson on Wednesday.

Patrombon will next face Australian Antonio Washington, who downed 18th seed Ben McLachlan of New Zealand, 7-5, 6-0.

Alcantara will take on Young Sukyoung of South Korea, who handled 1st seeds and Kishi Ami Hiki of Sweden, 6-1, 6-4.

"He (Alcantara) is facing a very dangerous opponent, but he is in good shape," coach Jun Toledo said of his ward who flew to Thailand after his Davis Cup stint in Osaka, where Japan swept the Philippines, 5-0.

In the doubles, Patrombon and Thanyaratee Matthawee Kaichitpanee yielded to American rivals Conor Uhlich and Mitchell Kruger, 6-0, 6-2, in the semifinal tie.

Alcantara and Thai Kittin Kosakul outlast Israeli foes in the round of 32 to Germans Matthias Wunsch and Bernd Klau, 6-4, 3-6, 10-8.

With reports from Anthony Reyes

RP's Sumampong shares lead in Faldo golf

BRENT SUMAMPONG IS EVEN-PAR BACK TO-back birdies for a two-under-par 72 and joined a three-way tie for the lead at the start of the Faldo Series Asia Finals at the Mission Hills Golf Club in Shenzhen, China, this Wednesday.

The 30-year-old Sumampong, a member of the PCTA-Tan Country Club team, shared the top with Malaysian national champion Kevin Cheah and Taiwanese Chi Hsien Hsieh in the 21-under event that is heading golfers from Europe.

Thailand's Thitipan Chaiwongsa and India's S. Chikkarangappa lay second after matching 72s.

Ben Arda Paz, the other PTA-backed Jet, struggled to an 80-to-par 72nd while Cabico is no. 6 three shots PCTA-Gonzalo's Junior Gaitos turned in 82 and 81, respectively.

San Luis Pasay cockiest today

SOME 80 PGA PLAYERS ARE scheduled to the PGA San Luis 4-Cock Derby today at the nine-hole Pasay City Golf Club.

Bulungan rookie R. Bedoya, a regular in big cockfights, is hosting the event conducted by PGA all members Eric Alba Bocaud Balicha Duno.

Among those tipped for figure prominently for the championship are the wizard of Ivey Lincoln Bangit Lim, Pol Fernandez Dan Rivera of Forbes Park Andoy Jao, Pol Tristan, the feisty Lyceum Cast Emil Dela, Boong Ando Cruz Boy de Rosa Tiger Gonzales and Dr. Long Campos.

Also vying are select members of the Bilibid Inmates Club.

The Governor De Maria 6-cocker exhibition which is [illegible]

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SPORTS

Pharex B secures first s'final berth

By Cedelf P. Tupas

PHAREX B COMPLEX FELL BACK ON ITS UNPROVING DEfenses to hack out a tough 86-82 victory over the ADMU Titanforwards yesterday and clinch the first semifinal berth in the PSL-PO Pilo Nieto Phenom's Cup at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig.

"We're not used to winning, especially the UP players in the team, but we're learning to do it here," said coach Alvin Gaston as Pharex B Complex grabbed the solo lead with its fifth win in a 5-1 card.

"I'm very happy to be in the semifinals. At least, we have one foot in the finals," added Castro, who noted that he'll cure role away from doubling his tally for the UP Maroons in the UAAP last season.

The Maroons held the Titanforwards to a single field goal in the last six minutes and scored just in the final 4:40.

"We just made the stops when it counted," said Gaston, who drew 17 points from his bench.

In the second game, Aaref Legaspi survived Ateneo's scoring dead-quarter rally for an 83-71 win that kept the Natural Conglomerate semifinal hopes alive.

Aaref improved to 3-3, 4th-ranked Ateneo 2-4 and Beta Cru 1-5.

Daniel JR Torres, who hardly crossed ripple while playing for San Beda in the NCAA, and Ma-Manuel, the 6-foot-4 recruit from the Philippine School of Business Administration, came off the bench to lead the Warriors with 19 and 16 points, respectively.

Manuel split his free throws with 1:59 remaining to break an 83-all tie and drove coast to coast for a lay-up with 53.4 seconds left to give Pharex a three-point edge.

ASCOF'S Ann Lalongisip loses possession of pass (Ateneo [left] and Rip Maconocido of Pharex C.

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2 UST athletes best of the lot in UAAP

ST. PAUL ONEZ STEPHEN TAN presented overall champion University of Santo Tomas proclaimed the two athletes of the year who were honored yesterday during the 72nd UAAP Second Awards Night at the De Ramos I Auditorium.

Underneath are Marlon Arevalo, who bagged silver medals in two consecutive meets last year, was adjudged MVP in the seniors division to duplicate the feat of swimmer Gee Barrios in the juniors.

The twin achievements punctuated another scintillating year for UST, which captured its 12th straight overall championship, after winning seven titles in 20 events.

UST sweeps men's and women's indoor volleyball and also ruled men's badminton, men's taekwondo, men's beach volleyball, tennis, and softball.

The 21-year-old Arevalo, a member of the national team, was silver medalist in the Asian Martial Arts Games in Bangkok last year and the Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

Besides set three records in a four-gold splurge in the league's swimming meet.

PEC president Anton Huang rode turned over the UAAP flag to Rev. Renato Dizi of La Salle, host of this year's championships.

Cedelf P. Tupas

Dipza paces Corp Cup

DIPZA DAILY SWIMMING SOLID PERFORMANCE JOSEPH GILO DIPZA Gilo, assembled a 271 to extend the Group I lead while Shakey's paced Group 2 with a 281 in the 22nd Corp. John Hay Subic Philippines Corporate Cup swimming at the John Hay Golf Club in Subic Bay.

Dipza stalled up 49 and 49 Mabini points while Lim recovered from a no-no 39 with a 49 as Dipza finally surged ahead.

Patrick Lee had 42 and 40 points while Troy Kingyad in 42 and 39 as Dipza totaled 271 for a 15-point lead over Columbia Doctors Hospital. John Celso sparked Supermarx 258 with a 40-34. Felipe Gazzam had 37-45, Eli Malaya made 31-30 and Dom Arrastia added 36-35.

Ingold Coffee Club posted a 253 while Rik-Com Technology turned in a 236 in the opening division of the four-league. Rose to round record.

Shakey's, meanwhile, took a 12-point lead over Hoefbe in Group 2 as it scorched with 281 behind Abel Ilmsworth 46 and 50 points, Em Rivera 47 and 45 and Ode Lugo's 37-38.

Ingold 3 dissatisfied with a 266 followed by Rogue Hackers 245.

TRIPLE SWEEP BY XAVIER TENNIS TEAM CHAMPS

Xavier School recently bagged all three major titles for the boys division in the 2010 Inter-School Tennis Association. The historic win was led by Coach Junjie Guadayo(2nd from left) with players (L-R) Enrique Ferrer, Justin Suarez, Joel Atienza, Jake Martin, Mark Tan, Patrick Ong, Leonard Cheng(Captain Grade School Team A), Stefan Suarez, Miko Eala (Captain Grade School Team B), Matthew Tan, Jolo Ferrer, Anton Punzalan, Jasper Tan(Captain High School), Tak Reyes and Ezra Ching."

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Editor Raul D. Maralit • Assistant Editor Carole S. Montano
BUSINESS

Budget shortfall reached ₱37.1B in January

Higher BOC, BIR tax take led to decline in deficit

By Roxanne W. Charabugo

THE COUNTRY'S BUDGET DEFICIT REACHED P37.1 billion in January—slightly lower than the P38.1 billion posted in the same month of 2009.

The Department of Finance said growth in the collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and Bureau of Customs (BOC) led to the decline in the country's budget gap. The two agencies together accounted for nearly 94 percent of total revenue in January.

Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves yesterday said the government's improved fiscal performance was welcome news.

"We hope to sustain this in the coming months, with revenue tar-

CONTINUED B2

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Technology that's the most important tool in the management of cancer patients - PET/CT provides anatomical and biological data during a single exam allowing accurate tumor detection and localization of most cancers.

The First and Only 3-Tesla MRI in the Country
Technology that's twice as powerful as 1.5 Tesla MRIs - the 3-Tesla MRI captures images with detail, clarity and speed. 3T strength can increase imaging resolution to generate detailed pictures of infection, tumors and vascular abnormalities, among others.

The First and Only 256-Slice CT Scanner in the Land
Technology that's a first in the Philippines for advanced CT imaging. – the 256-Slice CT Scanner has four times the detector coverage of a 64-Slice CT. It can measure blockages in heart and brain blood vessels no bigger than a toothpick's width.

Its rapid scanning speed shows a complete picture of the heart within two beats, compared to six or eight beats with older CT scanners - ideal for patients who have difficulty holding their breath, such as children and trauma patients.

The Non-Invasive Alternative to a Heart Transplant - ESMR
Technology that gives hope to heart patients with end stage Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) - Extracorporeal Shockwave Myocardial Revascularization (ESMR) is a non-invasive therapy using low energy shockwaves that stimulate growth of new blood vessels. This out patient procedure is well-tolerated and is safe and feasible.*

*Khattab, Ottaque et al. Department of Cardiology, Med-Centrum Heart Center Essen, University of Essen, Germany. CRT 2008 Washington D.C. USA

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ICTSI raises $250M from bond offer, sets higher capex for '10

Bulk of proceeds to be used to refinance obligations

Paolo G. Montecillo and Doris C. Dumlao

PORT OPERATOR INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER TERMINAL Services Inc. (ICTSI) successfully raised $250 million from a recent sale of 10-year bonds, proceeds of which will be used to mainly refinance existing obligations.

"One of our stated objectives for this transaction is to extend the average maturity of our liabilities to better match the duration of our assets," ICTSI vice president and treasurer Stefan Jose Ciatoura said in an interview.

In its offshore debut, ICTSI issued the bonds with an interest rate of 7.375 percent per annum.

The bond yield hit the lower end of an earlier price guidance of between 7.375 and 7.5 percent and represented a spread of 365.5 basis points over comparable US Treasuries, Ciatoura said.

Yield of the 10-year bonds represented a spread of 365.0 basis points over US treasury notes of the same tenure which the company used to price its offer, Ciatoura said.

ICTSI said in an earlier disclosure that its bond had hired HSBC and JP Morgan Securities as lead managers and bookrunners for the issuance.

"Proceeds of the offering issue will be used to fund the company's investments in existing and new terminal construction activities, refinance some of its existing debts and for other general corporate purposes," ICTSI told the local exchange earlier this month.

"We now have a premium unit of international investors participating in all kinds of our capital investments," Ciatoura said.

The company said it would spend about $1.01 billion this year for new and existing port development projects.

This is higher than ICTSI's 2009 capital expenditure program of $1.01 million.

Ciatoura said the company may also eye rising asset port projects here and abroad, but declined to give details.

Because of a decline in global trade, the company earlier reported that its profit fell to $147.9 million in 2009—15 percent lower than that of the previous year.

The company's revenue also dipped 9 percent to $521 million for the entire year.

The bond issue was the first such deal ICTSI has ever overseen, following roadshows held in Manila, Hong Kong and Singapore.

A banking source familiar with the deal told the business that 30 percent of the bonds were acquired by Philippine-based investors while 50 percent were snapped up by other Asian investors after the roadshows. The remaining 20 percent of the bonds were taken up by investors from the United States and Europe.

The port operator, which is led by businessman Enrique Razon Jr., is one of the largest in the world.

Incorporated in 1987, it has since expanded operations and is now managing the Subic Metro Container Terminal in Bataan, Don el La Plata in Argentina, Port of Batumi in Georgia, Port of Buenaventura in Colombia, Port of Guayaquil in Ecuador, Incheon in Shandong Province, China, Incheon Container Terminal in Syria, and the Makassar Port Container Terminal in Indonesia.

Apart from operating the Manila International Container Terminal in the Philippines, ICTSI also runs the Muelanas Container Terminal in Misamis Oriental, Makar Wharf in General Santos, Cebu Port in Cambodia, and Iloilo International Port in Iloilo City.

PRULINK	PRU LIFE UK
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Premiums	Mar. 10, 2010	Mar. 9, 2010
Bond Fund - Peso	1.00000	1.00000
Managed Fund - Peso	2.34000	2.34000
Growth Fund - Peso	1.13000	1.13000
Equity Fund - Peso	0.85000	0.85000
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.00000	1.00000
Balanced Return Fund 1	1.13000	1.13000
Balanced Return Fund 2	1.11000	1.11000
Protective Fund - Peso	1.00000	1.00000
Money Market Fund - Peso	1.03000	1.03000

Manila Water

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of **MANILA WATER COMPANY, INC.**, will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Makati City, on **Monday, April 12, 2010, at 9:00 a.m.**, with the following:

AGENDA

1. Determination of quorum
2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of stockholders on March 30, 2009
3. Annual Report and approval of the Audited Financial Statements as of December 31, 2009
4. Ratification of all acts and resolutions during the preceding year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Management Committees and officers
5. Election of directors, including independent directors
6. Election of the external auditor and fixing of its remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record as of February 15, 2010 will be entitled to notice and to vote at this meeting.

The Annual Meeting of stockholders will be followed by an organizational meeting of the Board of Directors for the election of the officers of the Company and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Balara, Quezon City, February 1, 2010.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SOLOMON M. HERMOSURA
Corporate Secretary

PDEx OKs listing of ₱10B in bonds issued by Gokongwei property firm

PHILIPPINE DEALING and Exchange Corp. (PDEx), the country's fixed-income exchange, has approved the listing of P10 billion in bonds issued last year by the Gokongwei property developer, diversified conglomerate, Robinsons Land Corp.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, RLC said PDEx had cleared the listing of the following RLC bonds effective March 16:

•₱5 billion worth of fixed-rate five-year bonds carrying an interest rate of 8.5 percent per year and due on July 14, 2014, and

•₱5 billion worth of fixed-rate five-year bonds carrying an interest rate of 8.05 percent per year and due on Aug. 17, 2014.

This should pave the way for the secondary market trading of the said bonds.

The bond issues carry the highest credit rating of PRS Aaa by Philippine Ratings Services Corp. (PhilRatings), indicating that the debt issues is of the highest quality with minimal credit risk and that the issuer's capacity to meet its financial obligations is extremely strong. In assigning the rating, PhilRatings said, one investor RLC's consistent revenue-generating profile and strong cash flow from a diverse portfolio of real estate assets. Doris C. Bonifacio

Nido moves to raise funds

NIDO PETROLEUM FROM Nido Petroleum Ltd. said the joint venture operating Service Contract 53MB had farmed out 12.5 percent of the contract to Tri World (SPC) Corp., as part of the firm's funding strategy for the Tindalo prospect in northwest Palawan.

Nido has farmed out a 7.5-percent interest in SC 53MB, while Siligan Petroleum Philippines Pty Ltd. did the same for another 4.9 percent interest.

Nido said its farm out agreement was worth $6.7 million, of which $2.2 million would be paid upfront. The balance will fall due when the Tindalo oil field begins commercial production. It did not, however, provide the details of the Siligan deal.

Nido said the agreements would bring down its participating interest to 62.1 percent but would retain its operator status. Yla gatis Petroleum would have a 30.5-percent interest in SC54B, while TriEnergy Ventures II BV retains its 15-percent stake.

Under the deal, Tri World will also market its net share of the crude oil produced from SC 54B with TriEnergy Pte Ltd. Arra R. Reyes

BSP keeps rates but withdraws stimulus measures

Rediscounting budget now down to ₱40B from ₱60B

By Michelle V. Ratea

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas maintained its key policy rates at historic lows but withdrew the so-called "stimulus" measures that were earlier implemented to help avert a recession.

The decision was reached during the policy-setting meeting of the Monetary Board yesterday.

The following were adopted during the meeting:

• Retention of the reverse repo rate at 4 percent.

• Retention of the repo rate at 6 percent.

• Retention of the rediscounting papers' eligibility level at 91 percent of the borrowing bank's credit instruments to 90 percent.

• Restoration of the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio requirement of 2 percentage points above industry average (down from 10 percentage points) for banks tapping discounting facility.

The first measure that is ongoing time, the outstanding amount of loans extended by the BSP under its rediscounting facility should not exceed P40 billion.

Under the rediscounting facility, the BSP accepts loans of a borrowing bank or an amount discounted from the latter's collectibles. Discount loans are backed by a bank's receivables.

The second move means that for every P100 worth of a bank's receivables, it can borrow P90 from the BSP.

The third move means that for a bank to be able to avail itself of a loan from the BSP's rediscounting facility, its NPL ratio should not go beyond 2 percentage points over industry average.

The BSP based these measures appropriate to prevent potential inflationary pressure that might come along with the economic rebound and to avoid choking the recovery that economists describe as nascent.

The BSP's key policy rates were first kept at 4 percent for overnight borrowing and 6 percent for overnight lending.

"The broad contours of the economic papers' eligibility level from 90 percent of the borrowing bank's credit instruments to 80

MRT 7 proponent to raise $1.3B

By Paolo G. Montecillo

DIVERSIFIED LIST CORP. (DLC), THE company that holds the contract to build the train line from Quezon City to Bulacan province, is out to raise $1.3 billion for the project.

The company, through its financial arms, is now tapping investors to fund the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) line 7, DLC said.

But the company denied it was on the brink of losing takeover by San Miguel Corp. (SMC).

SMC, Universal LRT said, was only one of many interested investors that the company had approached.

"DLC has tasked Morgan Stanley to tie financial advisory ... to raise equity and debt needed to finance the construction of the $1.3-billion project," DLC vice chair Roberto de Ocampo said in a statement.

"While it is true that Morgan Stanley has approached (McCloy) part of the project, there are other interested parties who are able to talk with (us) financial advisor," he added.

At present, the MRT 7 project is controlled by businessman Salvador "Buddy" Zamora II who, in turn, acquired majority control of the concessions in 2006 from its original proponent, Ismael Investment Holdings.

MRT 7 is a "build-gradual-transfer-operate, maintain and manage project," involving a 21.4-kilometer light rail transit route that extends from the MRT Line 31 North Edsa terminal in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

The project also includes an Intermodal Transport Terminal—a transportation hub for buses and other public transport vehicles—in San Jose del Monte, as well as a 42-km, six-lane feeder highway from the northern end of the line to Bocaue, Bulacan. This highway will link the intermodal terminal to the North Luzon Expressway.

Earlier reports quoting Zamora sources said SMC was about to take control of DLC, praising the diversifying food and beverage conglomerate as a position to benefit from the potentially lucrative commuter rail business between Metro Manila and the rapidly growing region to the north of the metropolis.

"To set the record straight, DLC has not sold its shares to SMC," de Ocampo said.

As envisioned by the proponents, the rail components of MRT 7 project will initially operate 108 rail cars in a three-car train configurations. Initial capacity is projected at 448,000 passengers a day, but will eventually be expanded to accommodate as many as 800,000 passengers daily.

The rail line will have 14 stations.

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Bullish RP property outlook seen to boost Globe Asiatique's IPO bid

The continued upswing in the Philippine real estate sector would spark renewed investor interest in property stocks this year, industry analysts said.

Aside from the property firms already being traded at the Philippine Stock Exchange, they said the soon-to-be Globe Asiatique Realty Holdings Corporation (GA) would be the safest investment hoping to cash in on the underrated property boom.

This, they pointed out, stems from the fact that GA is a strong niche player in the lower-end segment of the residential housing market – with an estimated net demand backlog of about 6 million homes, or about 60% of the total demand for housing units in the Philippines.

GA, founded by metalwork businessman Dodie Lee in 1994, has a string of successful housing projects, mostly in the provinces, which features self-contained townships or communities with first-class amenities for the lower-income market segments.

"This approach in real estate development has enabled the company to offer a unique value proposition in the market by placing strong emphasis in building sustainable communities within its projects, nurturing the social, economic and environmental aspects of the projects it completes," BDO Capital & Investment Corp., the company's financial adviser and lead underwriter for the planned initial public offering (IPO), noted in the firm's prospectus.

GA has a solid track record in the development of low-cost to middle-income housing projects, and has produced and delivered more than 13,000 units since its completed project primarily to end-users who can find affordable units.

Last year, those projects generated for the company a 27% higher revenues of P4.14 billion and a record P900-million profit, up 32 percent from the previous year.

It has a pending application at the Securities and Exchange Commission for an IPO to raise as much as P3 billion to fund and expand its projects, taking advantage of the sustained demand for low-cost housing amid a low interest rate environment.

The price of the share offer – between P6.06 to P10 each – translates to a price/earnings (P/E) ratio of about seven to 11 times, lower than the industry average of 15 to 17 times, making the issue an attractive one.

"The company is very unlike other listed property firms in terms of its target market and niche, its array of products and amenities, and its overall concept, strategy and approach as a developer," BDO Capital added.

The investment house said it expects the demand for low-cost housing to continue to be under-supplied for the next four to seven years, and thus anticipates GA's business to continue to grow in this segment.

"Through large capital-infused projects, the company aims to be the pioneer and dominant player in low-cost housing," it said.

"The ambitious continued investments in residential property buying in 2015, (demand remains robust owing to) real end-user demand (funded by resilient) OFW remittances," said Leo Venezuela, senior analyst at CLSA Asia-Pacific Markets.

In its latest report, the French-backed CLSA pointed out that the Philippine property sector will be driven by four major catalysts this year: the continued improvements in residential property buying (especially at the lower-end segment, helped by their expected retail performance owing to an election year with as much as $3 billion in estimated spending by candidates), more government debt sales to plug the budget deficit, and the launch of real estate investment trusts (REITs) by property companies.

"Moreover, the government, through the Pag-IBIG Fund, continues to increase lending to assist low homebuyers at the low end of the market. We expect relationship sales of property companies (residential developments) to grow by 15% year-on-year," Venezuela added.

Similarly, UBS-based investment bank Credit Suisse sees the property sector, along with banks, benefiting from the positive outcomes of the national elections scheduled to May.

In a recent report, Credit Suisse research analyst Richard Lopez said property and banking companies that are being traded at the PSE have the most potential upsides to the share price.

"We continue to have a positive political outcome in May 2016 as our base case. Under this scenario, we expect the property and banking sectors would do best and have the most potential upsides to the share price," Lopez stressed.

JP Morgan Asia (JPMA), a leading global property consulting firm, also noted in its latest report that the Philippine property sector showed resiliency amid the financial meltdown in the global market, and this is expected to continue into 2015 also towards as the domestic economy slowly regain its growth momentum.

CBRE chairman Ricky Santos said the property industry survived the onslaught of the global financial crisis as developers continue to open new projects to response to increasing demand.

"Real estate products will continue to sell given market demand but must be in the right location and responsive to buyers expectations as to price, quality and timely delivery," Santos pointed out.

Globe Asiatique President Dodie Lee

The Farmers, a residential housing project in Angeles, Pampanga is scheduled for launching next month.

Riviera Pines Cainta in Rizal by Ayala Land is April this year.

Riviera Bacolor and Riviera Mabalacat in Pampanga are 80% and 70% complete, respectively, both also with their own expansion projects.

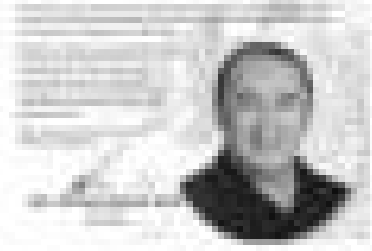
The Farmers, a high end executive condominium in Pampanga is 98% complete.

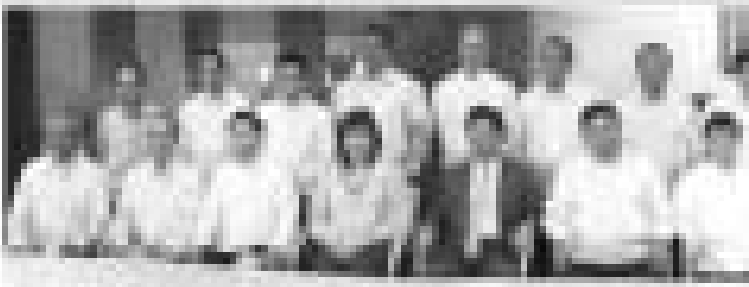
Crystal Valenzuela in Valenzuela City is one on its 7 lot building with plans of adding another 4 buildings in the next two years.

Sta. Rosa Homes, a low-rise/rowhousing project in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, is 60% complete.

The GA Sky Suites and Corporate Tower located on the busy EDSA corner Quezon Avenue is 20% complete.

Messages





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Lilou Arles Espinosa

Women claim their Magna Carta rights

AS PART OF DOVE'S 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY line-up of activities in 2010, Dove joined hands with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and the City of Taguig to kick-off the annual Women's Month celebrations at the Fort Bonifacio Global City on March 1.

Over 5,000 women participated in this historic affair that highlighted the recent enactment of the Magna Carta of Women's Rights into the Philippine law. The whole-day event started off with a Walk for Women's Rights, a 10-minute march on a designated route around Fort Bonifacio lead by lan Veneracion-Gonzalez – woman of beauty and substance who epitomizes Dove's platform for 2010: "Dove is free. Visibly Beautiful." Twelve women leaders include Philippine Sports Commissioner Akiko Thomson, stage performer Pinky Marquez, actress Nicole Kovacs, model and writer Raya Monasterial, fashion photographer Sam Medi, DJ and radio host Ria Magdaluyo, small business Mariclle Somes-Po, pause advocate Tiffany Cruz, radio/tv Bruce Campos, and events and image consultant Chiqui Hollmann-Puhs.

The march was followed by a program which was hosted by the dynamic Boots Primm-Valdes with Pinky Marquez co-hosting along side her. The ever gracious first lady of Taguig, Alan Peter, got onstage to welcome the crowd which included contingents from the national government agencies, NGOs, colleges and universities, LGUs, and private organizations. Unilever Philippines' managing director for health and beauty, Gilbert Simpao then spoke about Dove's continuing advocacy to help women see real beauty in themselves, no matter what shape, size, or color they may be. Also present to show their support and share their messages on upholding the Magna Carta of Women's Rights were DOH Secretary Esperanza Cabral, DSWD Acting Secretary Celia Yangco, and PCW Commissioner Ignacia Tolentino.

After the program, women were invited to the NBC Tent for a mini-fair which had various booths catering to women's health, beauty, wellness and livelihood. Dove set up a product demo booth and offered massage treatments with takeaway Dove beauty bars and clinic. Emcralds gave out samples of their natural medications. Aubree conducted hair serum-ing bars. Other exhibitors included Sandra Goodberry Foundation, Brahms Sunsara, Jaguar Natural Cosmetics, among others. Women were also offered free counseling and legal services as well as NSO civil registry services.

Looking back at a decade of real beauty in the Philippines, Dove has consistently pioneered positive self-image through campaigns that retained the spotlight on issues important to every woman. From its pore-sufficionism opened Dove Movement to Dove's Naked Tangling Philippines, to the internationally-acclaimed Campaign for Real Beauty, Dove's battle cry through the years has stayed true to its advocacy to encourage women to accept, celebrate and nurture how beautiful they truly are, just as they are.

4AS INTRODUCES 3210 THEME

The Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of the Philippines (4As) recently inducted the board of directors for 2010. The new board members Raymond Mercado, JWT Inc. Pramil Ling-ala, Gigi Garcia, Dino Lucenio, Bobby Concepcion, Portia Carlucci, Ignee Roldan and Andrei Katigbak along with Chad Hayes and his team after the successful event.

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The 4As introduced its 3210 theme which represents its objectivity, openness and the need for consensus-driven solutions. The new board members flanked Amanda Lacaba, JWT Inc. Pramil Ling-ala, Gigi Garcia, Dino Lucenio, Bobby Concepcion, Portia Carlucci, Ignee Roldan and Andrei Katigbak along with Chad Hayes and his team after the successful event.

Supply chain management best practices

THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL BEST Practices (CGBP), in collaboration with Procurement and Sourcing Institute of Asia (Pinnacle), is launching a special program entitled Best Practices in Supply Chain Management to be held at the Intercontinental Hotel, Makati City on April 28. Any business worth a product to sell and who wants to cut costs, improve quality, and increase productivity must understand this very important topic. Supply Chain Management (SCM) spans all movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-process inventory, and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. Implementing the best practices in this area of your business operation is a powerful way to gain competitive advantage and drive growth for your organization. In this 1-day program, CGBP will fly in experts to teach you the best practices, pitfalls and how to avoid, helpful resources, and latest trends in and updates on supply chain management that you can bring back to your company and implement effectively. Patrick Woods, the president of Supply Chain Education will share with you the practical applications of Six Sigma concepts – the most important problem solving methodology to improve business performance – that you can promote practice in your workplace to improve your profitability. Yours Trevor Rivera, VP of Supply Chain Asia and Europe of Mead Johnson Nutritionals, you will also learn the best practices risk management strategies and approaches in your procurement to decrease the vulnerability of your supply chain and develop a risk sharing approach with suppliers based on performance contracts. This risk management approach has proven to save millions of costs for he company and others worldwide. We will also feature Danny Kalim, vice president, Supply Chain of JDS Software Group, who will share the valuable insights and applications related to supply trends globally or SCM. Bruno Rilet, a veteran industry expert will present the best practices and right methodology on sales and operations planning for your organization. Learning this methodology is very empowering to an organization and its people. This one-time event is for those seriously looking for business gains and benefits in managing their supply chain more effectively. For full information, registration, and early bird discounts, check www.cgbp.org or e-mail jan.sta@cgbp.org. This is a limited-seats-only event so pls pre-register. Be inspired!

PHARMALINK AT PGCS FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

A glittering night honoring Philippine Pharmacists was the Silhouette's theme for the Fellowship Night of the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society's (POGS) 2008 Annual Convention and Allied Scientific Meeting dubbed as "Viva LEGAL-ed Filipina" held recently at the Solaire Resort & Casino Pasay City in Manila.

The annual event was presided over by POGS Spot Advisor Irene Lim-Sylianteco together with Fellowship Night Chairman Dr. Ma. Cristina Cenina-Castro and Convention Chairman Dr. Ma. Victoria Cruz-Ocampo. Among POGS' many activities in the Philippines is Pharmalink, a provision of Bio Flora – a newly-launched feminine hygiene product designed for every woman at different stages of womanhood. Pharmalink president Tito Valentino was present to welcome the guests and POGS officers as well as women and ladies from their allied product. Bio Flora, also known as FGS intimate powder care for women's reproductive health as it caters to three variants: Restores, Protect and Moisturizes.

Play with me Pollivalis Sesame

CHILDREN WILL EXPERIENCE THEIR favorite characters from the famous TV show in the neighborhood they spend their Pollivalis Sesame Street edition shops. Elmo and Cookie Monster seasons will get character footprints while Ossie will leave wavy impressions on dirt or sand. Pollivalis featured deep load capacity or superior fit and a built-in anti-slip pad, making it comfortably safe for use by active kids. All designs require easy cleaning – just brush off dirt and debris, then clean in a chlorine-washed with cold water or gentle cycle. Pollivalis is open for dealership. Contact Owen Lim through 0908-8628868 or (632) 3648348, or tel. no. (632) 470-1121, or e-mail address info@pollivalisinternational.com for more details. Pollivalis footwear is available at Rustan's, Robinsons and Landers, SM Grab Prime, Isetan Cubao, SM Megamall, The Lonely Planet Chibal, The Lonely Planet Publishing Company, 1828 Brunfaute High Street, BGC Cebu, Dito and Co., SM Mall of Asia, SM North Edsa, Party Packagers, Inc. hands and Mom, and dressers and Sprouts.

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LG introduces the Health+ Inverter Air Conditioner with highest EER in RP

LG ELECTRONICS [LG], THE GLOBAL NO. 1 brand in air conditioners for nine straight years, introduces the LG Health+ Inverter air-conditioner in the Philippines. The LG Health+ Inverter has 15.3 EER, the highest in the Philippines, the world's fastest operating inverter level of 6 more, 5400R, and the highest energy-efficiency rating up to 60-percent more compared to previous non-inverter models. It also offers a range of healthcare features designed to help prevent consumers from allergens and viruses like AH1N1, while it upgrades the home environment with its stylish design.

"The LG Health+ Inverter features energy savings, silence, safety and stylish design to provide consumers benefits for convenience, for basic yet powerful performance," said Raymond Hernandez, corporate marketing head of LG Electronics Philippines.

The LG Health+ Inverter boasts of the highest Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) at 15.30 in the Philippines. LG's cutting-edge inverter technology enables the new air conditioners to consume less energy than conventional air conditioners and to cool a room extremely fast.

To ensure a good night's sleep, the LG Health+ Inverter reduces operating noise to 19dB, which is almost inaudible to humans. When the air conditioner is activated, the compressor operates at maximum speed to reach the desired temperature quickly. Unlike conventional air conditioners, the LG Health+ Inverter adjusts and varies compressor speed once the desired temperature is achieved to maintain a constant temperature. LG's inverter technology plays a critical role to minimizing noise and vibration, which helps create a more comfortable environment.

In terms of safety, the LG Health+ Inverter demonstrates controlled health care features by employing LG's advanced multi-filter system. Contaminated air floating inside the room is purified through a multi-filter air unit. Bacterial pre-filter, a triple-filter for deodorization, plasma filter for sterilization, a nitro safety filter, especially for A(H1N1) and last Bio, allergy free filter, and finally an ionizer for sterilization. The multi-filter system are more free from harmful bacteria, viruses, germs and nasty smells.

Like other LG products, the Health+ Inverter has been designed to harmonize with most home environments. With its sleek, attractive and streamlined look, it will help create a more pleasant environment and improve quality of life for consumers.

In addition to the benefits of energy savings, silence, safety and stylish design, the LG Health+ Inverter offers an Auto Cleaning function for easier maintenance and a healthier environment. It also features increased durability thanks to the presence an anti-corrosive coating on the heat exchanger's surface. It also includes an installation-friendly design with ample space for piping, connections on the installation plate and a detachable bottom cover.

With its range of features and modern design, LG's room air conditioners are set to help consumers enjoy healthy and comfortable lives.

TRADE FAIR AT GREENHILLS

The 17th National Furniture, Furnishing and Fashion Show is set to be held back to back with the 16th Philippine Folk Arts and Crafts from March 12 to April 5 at the Greenhills Shopping Complex. Organized by Primex Total Trade Planners and Convention Organizer (Philippines), the trade fair will have 2,000 small and medium entrepreneurs from many parts of the country showcasing assorted products.

HEALTHWAY NURTURE SPA TIE-UP

Healthway recently announced a tie-up with Nurture Spa that seeks to harmonize and maximize the benefits of traditional and modern healthcare. Through a suite of packages for singles, couples, and corporate groups, Healthway offers its members Healthwell, a member with day and overnight hour packages at Nurture Spa in Salcedo Village, Makati. Packages include day and overnight wellness healing programs, medical laboratory tests, access to a Healthcard and tennis, massages, and meals at the Nurture Spa. Others range from month designers and consultation through the digital reminder system offered by this spa to coordinate dinners and digestive spa treatments. Nurture spa is also located at Boracay, overseas Filipino workers association, and bathhouses. For more details, and any of the Healthway clinics in Cebu Shangri-La, Alabang Town Center, Eastwood Mall, Trinoma Mall, Cebu City, Market Market!, and Robinsons Place Manila, call (02) 4998888 or log on to www.healthway.com.ph. Shown in the

photo (from left) Gabby Garcia, Healthway's business development manager for Healthcard; Carmela De Leon, Healthway's VP for sales and marketing; Eleanor Tan (BC) Healthway's president; Kate Cruz, Healthway's assistant product manager; Gabby Sorrell, president of Nurture Spa Group; and Arlene Nicolas, Healthway's business development manager for Healthway Cards.

ASIAN FOOD CHANNEL LAUNCHES FIRST RETAIL STORE

The Asian Food Channel (AFC) launches its first retail store, AFC Kitchen Studio at Ortigas Center for its viewers, offering viewers their own chance to touch and feel. The new store will provide the ideal platform to further engage viewers, giving them visitors to consume the most up-to-date information on

gadgets and books, check out the latest in built-in kitchen appliances as well as somewhere to relax, exercise and sample the delicacies from the set, which when opened will serve a variety of teas and coffee, together with pastries and cakes. AFC will also use the store as the location for a variety of hands-on cookery classes and demonstrations to inspire the budding chef in everyone and will also act as a studio for filming of AFC original self-made documentaries and productions. The AFC store is located at 101 Orchard Road, Orchard Central #02-02, Singapore, and is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily.

FUTAT STEEL JOINS PHILCONSTRUCT EXHIBIT

Futat Steel Corporation, manufacturer of APO roofs and floor tiles systems joined the Philconstruct exhibit at the SMX Convention Center recently. The Futat Steel booth displayed the top selling APO roofs and floor products and drew one of the largest crowds of visitors during the exhibit. APO products are manufactured under ISO-certified processes in world-class facilities, deliver top high quality products to discerning customers.

BIR beats Feb. target

By Russell M. Dominguez

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue beat its monthly target for the third consecutive month in February, with preliminary data showing that collection reached P46.5 billion, slightly exceeding the target of P46.2 billion.

The BIR was able to beef up its collection due in part to the P1.65 billion in back taxes from component 2000 transactions.

Revenue Commissioner Jose G. Tan Torres said the additional collection was secured through notices to some 1,000 taxpayers, which was done through the BIR's tax reconciliation system.

Tan Torres said the agency was completing cross-checking discrepancy sources of data to locate companies that concealed payments to fail to report to the BIR.

Last week, he said the BIR was expected to surpass its February target by some P6 billion.

Also, the chief ensured employees to make sure that the correct withholding taxes were deducted from direct employees' salaries pay and remitted promptly to the BIR.

Those who fail to comply are "liable to a penalty equal to the amount not withheld and remitted, in addition to other penalties," Tan Torres said.

On the other hand, he also warned employees who withhold amounts exceeding the correct tax but refuse to refund the excess.

Those who refuse are liable to a penalty equal to the excess amount not refunded to the taxpayer.

Under the tax code, violators may face criminal liabilities of between P1,000 and P100,000 as well as a jail term of one to 10 years.

The current thrust is "a comprehensive approach to forced criminal liabilities may be imposed and enforced," Tan Torres said.

In a related campaign, the BIR is branching to 61 government units in connection with its anti-unregistered activities sending some P1.65 billion.

The amnesty was on top of the P1.2 billion in unpaid taxes than the BIR was trying to collect from the 99,000 City government.

New Diwalwal parcel up for bids

By Rica T. Olchondra

ANOTHER MINERAL PROPERTY WITHIN the gold-rich Mt. Diwalwal area in Compostela Valley is up for bidding.

Every-one Philippine Mining Development Corp. (PMDC) is inviting interested Filipino corporations to apply for eligibility and submit sealed bid proposals for a joint operating agreement for the exploration, development and mining operations of the 729 PMDC Area Below 600 Level."

The parcel covers about 729 hectares within the 4,150-hectare Diwalwal Mineral Reservation.

Eligibility forms may be obtained from PMDC from March 11 to 22 and the sealed bid proposals should be submitted between March 23 and April 7.

Pre-qualified bidders may get bidding documents from April 14 to 20 and sealed bid proposals should be in by May 14.

PMDC is the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

In addition to the Mt. Diwalwal projects, the PMDC will get royalties on the production of gold, copper and other minerals.

Last Wednesday, Elademon Mineral Resources participated in the re-bidding of the Lower V property.

There was slightly more interest in the adjacent Higanbuhay Hole property, which was auctioned off earlier, with two companies submitted bids in the parcel.

PMDC bids and awards committee (BAC) chair Ashur T. De Veyra said in a phone interview that Blackstone offered to explore and develop the Lot No 9 property if it is allowed P30 million.

The minimum bid for the 1,200-hectare lot or V was P30 million.

PMDC declared a failure of bidding on the Lower V property in December 2009 when two pre-qualified firms Diwalwal Jaba Consolidated Mining & Development Corp. and private company BF Gold & Co. failed to submit bids.

Area covers 729 has, PMDC says

Meralco loses out on at least P1B in revenue

By Amy R. Remo

POWER DISTRIBUTOR MANILA ELECTRIC Co. (Meralco) has to fix hitch to collect over P1 billion in revenue because of the recalculation of its 20.9-centavo increase in distribution, supply and metering charges.

Meralco first vice president and treasurer Rafael Andrada said the company was still awaiting the decision of the Energy Regulatory Commission on the suspension.

On last January this year, Meralco voluntarily suspended the implementation of the 20.9-centavo increase in distribution charges to allow the government to regulate to resolve a motion filed by a certain Robert Medina.

Meralco questioned details of the ERC decision that allowed Meralco to increase its distribution starting Jan. 1, 2010.

Francis de la Rama, Meralco vice president and head of utility economics, said the company hoped that the ERC would soon resolve the issues raised by Medina to enable Meralco to implement its new distribution charges.

In a related development, Andrada said that Meralco would soon complete its study on what type of power facility the company will put up and how much investments will be needed for its ventures into the power generation business.

Meralco president Jose D. de Jesus said earlier that the company was more inclined to invest in new power projects rather than buying an old facility since most of the government-owned assets, particularly the power plants, have already been sold.

De Jesus explained that having its own power plant would prospect Meralco for the open contract and retail competition, where customers will be allowed to choose their own suppliers.

Glaring contradictions in rice importation

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

THERE APPEARS TO BE A CONSIDERable difference between the amount of rice that the country will not be able to harvest this year because of the El Niño weather phenomenon and the volume that the government plans to import to cover the shortfall.

Last March 4, Rice Watch's Jessica Castro stated that palay production in the first six months of this year is expected to decline by only 1.7 percent compared to some 2 percent last year.

She then asked: "Why does a 1.7-percent decline in palay production necessitate a 10-percent increase in rice imports?"

We did further research on this and got the natural boom released to by three percentages.

The announced 1 million metric ton rice imports this year is approximately 700,000 tons more than last year's 2.3 million tons.

On the production side, the DA's Bureau of Agriculture Statistics estimated that total production would decline to 7.26 million metric tons in the first six months this year from 7.38 million metric tons in the same period last year.

In terms of rice, this would mean a shortfall of only 60,000 metric tons.

Grower Anna Executive Director Dan Rosenberg asked, "Why import almost 10 times the volume of rice that is actually needed by our people?"

Worst fears

Many farmers of the Nilalawid Rice Plantation Cooperative headed by Jaime Tolay are afraid that their worst fears might be realized.

Because it is election season, they believe that this excess importation is an opportunity to make extra money for a few importers with the corresponding kickbacks, overpricing and substandard rice.

In addition, farmers think will be too much rice and it would be a great embarrassment to the government if it does not dispose of this rice like government will be forced to sell at very low prices to get rid of the excess supply.

This means prices of rice will go down, thus further depressing the already very low incomes of rice farmers who will be forced to sell at these depressed prices.

This will be ironic.

Instead of the government helping create jobs for the farmers, it will effectively give these jobs to foreign farmers who will supply us with rice much rice.

Furthermore, the low existing jobs, the farmers have will yield even lower incomes because the rice prices will drop as a result of too many rice imports.

Another view

Rice Watch has taken a position that importing 3 million tons of rice this year is definitely wrong. But there may be another view.

If there is a view that can justify this importation, Rice Watch has not found out it. This is because there is no mechanism for a systematic and constant dialogue between Rice Watch and the Department of Agriculture, which is making this decision.

As long as there is no such mechanism, contradictions in rice importation and other key agricultural matters will continue to persist.

In the common agenda of the Aquino Agriculture, it states: "Implement a masterplan for each agricultural sub-sector with small farmer and fisher participation for that specific sector backed by full government support."

This particular recommendation has not been followed in the rice sub-sector. Furthermore, there is no organizational body that has been created with government-privately sector participation that oversees and guide the implementation of a rice master-plan.

Reinventing the wheel

Why reinvent the wheel? Today, there is a Cabinet-level composed of government and private sector representatives which could jointly co-implementing the government's own program.

Contradictions in the rice sector, such as the one identified here for the rice sector, are discussed in a scheduled and programmed basis by the Cora Board.

Since rice is a strategic commodity, the DA should immediately organize a Rice Board similar to the Cora Board.

All rice major stakeholders, including but not limited to farmers, seed growers, input providers, traders, retailers, and government agencies such as the DA and the National Food Authority, should be included in the board.

Newly appointed Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla can leave behind the important legacy of creating this Rice Board as his own first month in office.

This board can immediately address the rice importation contradictions identified here.

It can also start the foundation of a rice masterplan aimed at rice self-sufficiency that will provide our rice farmers an opportunity for better income, can consensure a guarantee of food security, and can enhance the hope for true agriculture development our nation needs so badly today.

(The author is chair of Agrimarch and former undersecretary for Agriculture and Trade and Industry. For comments and suggestions, e-mail agrimarch_phil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 07-5211.)

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[illegible]	House & Lot	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	with bldgs./occupants
[illegible]	House & Lot	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	with bldgs./occupants
[illegible]	Residential Lot	—	[illegible]	[illegible]	with bldgs./occupants
[illegible]	Residential Lot	—	[illegible]	[illegible]	with bldgs./occupants
[illegible]	Residential Lot	—	[illegible]	[illegible]	with bldgs./occupants

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN BE DIRECTED/REFERRED TO ASSET MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSITION GROUP (AMDG) LOCATED AT 7TH /8TH FLOOR, JAIME BALMORI ST. SEN. GIL J. PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, DURING OFFICE HOURS. THE OPENING OF BIDS WILL BE ON MARCH 23, 2010, 10:00 AM AT THE AMDG CONFERENCE ROOM.

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BUSINESS Friday

Former exec provides 'a taste of the past'

By Karen Lapitan
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PABLO CITY—EVEN AS THE corporate world was financially rewarding, Roy Empalmado felt he wanted to do something else so he could achieve a sense of fulfillment.

A former marketing director of a beauty company, Empalmado decided to come up with his own business that ended up as a conveyance of his passion to restore food and history.

"I got too tired of the corporate world, and I wanted to do something that I would really enjoy," says the former executive.

Empalmado, 50, chanced upon a Spanish-style ancestral house located in Quezon that was under auction then.

Fascinated, he joined the auction and won the property. His triumph in the auction served as a signal for him to push through with a new venture.

In comparison to the other bidders of the auctioned house, who were mainly dealers of surplus iron and who seemed to be just after the house's expensive materials, Empalmado was interested in preserving the whole structure.

His thought of using it as part of a restaurant he was trying to put up.

Piece by piece, he transferred the old house to San Pablo City, working by restoring the ancestral house, from the walls to its doors, so it would resemble the old home.

Antiques

Meanwhile, Empalmado's friend, Arthur Reyes, was already in the antique business at that time.

The two decided to combine a restaurant and an antique gallery into one, initially shelling out P500,000 for the business to become operational.

After several phases of hardships in restoring the old house, their venture named Subuy Gallery Café started its

CONTINUED ON B2.2

FROM an ancestral house won through an auction, Subuy Gallery Café has become a popular meeting place in San Pablo City.

NEW WORLD GM Paul Blair Schwarzt

Something old, something new

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT WAS LIKE A SINGLE WOman got married, took her husband's name, then decided to get her own name back.

That is how general manager Paul Alain Schwarzt explains why the New World Hotel in Ermita/Malate City invested in its previous name last year... after more than 10 years under management of the Marriott group. And when the market had gotten used to calling it the Renaissance Makati City Hotel.

But the expensive rebranding of the debutant 1996 iconic, five-star hotel was a major move that had to be taken as part of the fledgling Hong Kong-based hotel chain's campaign to build up the New World brand as among the best for tourists and business travelers, starting with its luxury arm-of in Asia.

Rebranding involves not only changing the names on the letterheads, the signage and marketing collateral, but also the upgrading of the amenities and eventually the lobby and the rooms to give the 18-year-old hotel that desired New World look, which is Asian in flavor but global in standards.

"We are positioning the New World's chain as a five-star consumer-led hotel brand with Asia as its roots," Schwarzt tells Business Friday in an interview. "We are targeting the middle to the upper range of the five-star market."

There are nine New World hotels in operation, six of which are in mainland China. The other three are in the Philippines, Macau and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, evidence of the New World group's plans to use make its presence felt in burgeoning Asia before venturing into other continents.

For the Philippines, Schwarzt reveals that key management people from Hong Kong recently visited the hotel, inspected all the rooms and facilities as well as the backend operations as part of the process of finalizing a five-year plan to upgrade the hotel to the New World standards.

"We are already doing some soft renovations and the five-year plan will include the other parts of the hotel like the lobby and the guest rooms. We are also looking at putting in new facilities such as a spa," Schwarzt says.

He expects the five-year plan to be finalized by the middle of the year, so that changes will start to be implemented starting the fourth quarter this year or the first quarter of 2015 at the latest.

"We will do the changes gradually, going floor by floor. We will not be closing down the hotel to make way for the renovations," Schwarzt says.

He is confident that the market will respond positively to the real changes being implemented at New World, especially with the improved food and beverage outlets such as the Aventine, a fine Cantonese restaurant specializing in dim sum and Canadian lobster cocktails and light snacks.

SOMETHING B2.3

SPRYLICIOUS Lisvalin (left), president and general manager of Gardenia Bakeries Philippines Inc. (GBPI), with Hanser Constantin, marketing and sales manager, at the launch of Gardenia's likelihood program, Gardenia Pusbreri.

Yes, there is 'bread' in bread

IN THIS TIME OF ECONOMIC uncertainty new income-generating opportunities arise as a result of ever-changing market needs and demands.

One such opportunity lies in making "bread" out of bread to meet the ever-increasing demand for high quality fresh bread among consumers in busy areas such as subdivisions, school canteens and churches.

Gardenia Bakeries Philippines, maker of Gardenia breads that are known for their distinctive taste, softness and aroma, is embarking on a new venture called the "Gardenia Pusbreri," a franchised program that aims to provide income-generating opportunities to unemployed Filipinos and interested entrepreneurs as part of its corporate commitment to social responsibility.

Starting off in Metro Manila in 2010, the Gardenia Pusbreri program offers unemployed individuals the chance to get hired as pushcart vendors who can earn as much as P2,000 daily—if they sell 50 packs of bread in a day.

To qualify, applicants must be at least 18 years old, hard-working, physically fit and healthy enough to withstand harsh outdoor elements.

As a distributorship selling program, the Gardenia Pusbreri is also calling on microentrepreneurs who will work alongside the territorial distributors who are in charge of supplying breads to sari-sari stores.

Microentrepreneurs will serve as operators in areas not covered by Gardenia's territorial distributors.

The complementary roles of microentrepreneurs and territorial distributors in supporting this program is cited by GBPI sales manager Carlito Sarjoma.

"Territorial distributors, our partners in helping deliver our breads to sari-sari stores, will now become operators of the pushcart program in their respective areas. However, we are also open to other interested parties who may want to venture into the program in areas not covered by the territorial distributors," he said.

Given the income-generating potential of the Gardenia Pusbreri and one's determination to succeed, one can now say that men can possibly live by bread alone.

For more details, interested parties and applicants may contact Carlito Sarjoma at 889-8899.

US retailers should leave demographics behind

CHICAGO—US RETAILERS MUST focus on their distinct types of shoppers rather than traditional demographics to drive growth, a new survey of consumer behavior found.

Grocers, supermarkets and other retailers must also get shoppers to buy more at their existing locations instead of trying to grow by opening new stores, based on findings from German consumer products maker Henkel.

Shoppers who plan their trips, scanning circulars and clipping coupons, actually spend more money than others, making them a prime target for retailers and manufacturers, according to Henkel, but known in the United States for Dial soap.

These shoppers accounted for 35 percent of spending on packaged goods in 2009, even though they only make up 20 percent of US households.

Despite their bargain-hunting ways, the group—which Henkel dubbed "Shoptimizers"—on average spent more than $7,100 last year, buying more packaged goods while cutting back on some fresh items, Henkel said.

"We haven't seen the impact of the economic times really reduce their spending," said Mark Hoopes, research manager of shopper insights at Henkel Consumer Goods North America.

But they shop around. In 2009, such savvy shoppers visited an average of 11 different chains in their hunt for the best deals, or about one-third more stores than those who shop without planning. They also dropped almost two of their 20 trips to drugstores and added a trip to supercenters such as Wal-Mart Stores Inc. as they searched for bargains.

Similarly profitable

Consumers who do a little planning before they shop and look for deals once they are in stores, a group Henkel calls "Mainstreeters," spent close to $6,300 on average, up 8%.

"The economic times have kind of hit this group and they are now searching the ads," Hoopes said.

Carefree shoppers, who never use coupons, spent just over $5,000 on such outlets last year, up 12.6%, Henkel found.

Despite their distinct shopping patterns, the three groups generate similar margins for retailers that are nearly identical, he said. They are also split evenly in age, income and household size.

The survey, based on tracking of about 40,000 households done by AC Nielsen and Information Resources Inc., does not include spending at restaurants. That may explain some of the discrepancy as those who are a bit more cautious about spending in stores may also spend more dining out.

Private labels

Grocery lists have been busy pruning low prices in their attempt to steal market share. That effort, in part, led to narrowing margins at Kroger Co., the largest by grocer at the end of last year.

Another concern for manufacturers is whether shoppers will continue to opt for private label goods after the economy strengthens. Spending on store branded items rose 4 percent in 2009 as the recession continued and job losses mounted, according to Henkel.

Despite the downturn, dollar store chains such as Dollar General did not lure more shoppers last year, according to the survey. However, those who went already shopping at such stores spent more, adding to their annual tab.

Drugstores such as Walgreen Co. and CVS Caremark Corp. lost some bargain hunters in 2009 after three years of gaining such shoppers. Only 37 percent of drugstore revenue came from those shoppers last year, down from almost 40 percent in 2008, Hoopes said. Reuters

From page B1-1

ing businesses, Jan. 17, 2007.

It offers a fusion of food and history as antique items are also displayed and sold.

The restaurant and antique gallery now stands in Barangay Del Rosario in San Pablo City.

Salvaje Gallery Café occupies a hectare of the space of the former Cocobed Hotel Compound.

It is composed mainly of two structures. The first one houses the restaurant, which is also the second house for antiques. As fe bought to Quezon. The other one is the antique gallery which has hundreds of antique items that are part of the partners' collection.

Items old pieces of furniture to old cathedral benches, Salvaje Gallery Café offers a trip to the past that is true to its tagline, "A taste of the past."

"Our tagline would speak of what we want to show other people. We want them to have a taste of the past," says Ompad, adding that she shared that experience with her business partners during

Food, he says, they would offer accommodations.

Colorful past

Empalmado says Salvaje Gallery Café mainly aims to remind diners of the color-ful past by showing items that are remin-ders of the different phases of history.

Diners can choose from antique beds, chairs, gas lamps and dinner wares that all exude Filipino-Spanish lifestyle.

There are also a vast collection of old telephones and radios that never fail to arouse such curios.

Vintage vehicles are likewise displayed right below the entrance of the antique gallery.

Visiting each hall of the gallery seems like visiting each of the 19th century.

Each item is for sale, according to Empalmado.

Traditional Filipino dish

Appetizing meals are served at the restaurant.

Most diners, she would say their meals first or sip cups of coffee before having a tour of the antique gallery according to Empalmado.

Salvaje Gallery Café specializes in traditional Filipino food such as kare-kare and adobo.

Dishes range from P100 to P300 that are already good for two to three persons.

Bringing in lumpia and calamares with citrus mayonnaise dip also entice customers, but was blended of best and mild cod for an educated.

The rustic and sophisticated ambiance of Salvaje Gallery Café continues to amaze more restaurant goers and antique lovers.

"Marketing that kind of business could be a little bit hard, but we are confident that we can popularize history by offering something different. We want our clients to appreciate the past," says antique aficionado Empalmado.

Salvaje Gallery Café is open 7 days a week, from noon to midnight.

SALVAJE Gallery Café in San Pablo City is filled with antique decor appreciated by many diners.

'I got tired of the corporate world, and I wanted something I would really enjoy'

THREE PHILIPPINE TEAMS TO COMPETE AT CANNES LIONS 2010

CANNES LIONS
57TH INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING FESTIVAL
20-26 JUNE 2010

In previous years, the country sent a pair of young creative professionals annually to compete for the Young Lions awards at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. With two categories opening up for the Philippines to the Young Lions in 2010, plus the launch of the brand-new Young Marketers competition, our delegation has been given even more chances of winning at the prestigious world advertising event.

The Young Lions and Young Marketers competitions are much-anticipated highlights of the week-long festival at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France in June. The Cannes Lions is considered to be the world's biggest celebration of creativity in communications. Over 10,000 delegates attend scores of seminars, workshops and master classes by luminaries in the industry and other fields.

The Young Lions categories assigned to the Philippines this year are Cyber and Film. Two pairs of creatives will be chosen among different local advertising agencies at the Kidlat Awards Festival, hosted by the Creative Guild of the Philippines at the Benavidez Regency Hotel in Binaliay, Makati from April 12 to 14.

With this year's theme, "Pure Creativity," the Kidlat Awards recognizes the past year's best creative advertising work in film, press, radio, outdoor, interactive, design, direct, innovative marketing communications, integrated/multimedia, and creative media, plus the Dina Awards, and technical award categories. The Philippines' Act of the Decade will also be honored at the event.

Special guest judges at the Kidlat Awards are Cannes Lions 2010 Outdoor jury president Tay Guan Hin of JWT Asia Pacific; multi-awarded copywriter Eugene Chong of Ogilvy Asia Pacific; and Y&R Asia's chief creative officer Marcus Rebeschini.

On April 29 to May 1, the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) will host its first ever Brand Camp, with young marketing specialists gathering for an intensive lectures program focusing on marketing insights and developing inspired agency briefs.

The camp features talks by Peter Rodenbeck of DDB Asia Pacific, Peter Sandor of Ramon 141, McCann Erikson's Randy Villar and Hennie de Leon of the OmniCom Media Group.

The teams will get to head to head for the chance to represent the country in the Young Marketers competition at the Brand Camp. Companies that have signed up include Bauer Communications, Johnson & Johnson, Jollibee, McDonald's, Nestle, Smart Communications, Unilab and Unilever.

Two participants in each team will present an agency brief for a multi-media campaign based on their own company's products. The contest, which is open to marketers under the age of 30, will test the teams' knowledge of their own companies' brands and advertising needs.

The PANA Brand Camp will be held at the Taal Vista Hotel in Tagaytay City from April 29 to May 1.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer is the country's official representative at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. For more information you may contact our Corporate Affairs office at 897 8808 local 288. To submit entries or register as delegates, log on to www.cannestions.com.

INQUIRER
Official Festival Representative

Something old...

From page B1-1

"We want to be part of the social lifestyle of Metro Manila. We want to put the hotel on the map, at the center of what's happening," Schwaab says.

To advertise that New World is up against considerable odds since it is competing for the same market with bigger and more established brands in the Makati central business district.

But Schwaab says he is banking on the prime location of the New World Hotel in the Greenbelt shopping and leisure district and the convenience of the New World team to meet the group's targets for this year.

"We have location in our favor and a great staff. Almost all of the employees have decided to stay with New World and they can help keep the loyal guests and make them more comfortable," Schwaab says. "With a committed team and passionate owners, we are in a position to take advantage of opportunities."

And Schwaab says that there are many, especially with business travel going up as the global economy recovers.

Said most for now New World did "very well," ending ahead of its budget. He expects 2010 would be even better.

"We did go out of the ender for a while but we are aggressive in repositioning ourselves in the market," Schwaab says. "We want the market to know that we are preparing for a busy year. We are back."

In this Pangasinan village, 'Panday' lives on

By Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

CALASIAO, PANGASINAN—THE FEISTY Jomike cosmic hunk) character "Panday," the blacksmith popularized in the movies by the late actor Fernando Poe Jr., has been embedded in the consciousness of most adult Filipinos.

But far from the celluloid world, in a quaint street in this agricultural town in central Pangasinan, live hundreds of real blacksmiths.

While they don't have Panday's powers to fight off evil characters, their skills are enough to triumph over competition as they craft bolos and swords out of discarded steel.

The street is aptly called "Bendayan" and here, at least 32 families have turned their backyards into workshops that churn out hundreds of bolos of different shapes daily.

Pandayanis, bolos, and other occasional decorative swords, mark markets in Pangasinan and nearby provinces.

Bernardo Roy, 66, one the local pandays, says the backyard industry was started by two brothers from Bauang—now full-fledged Ilocanos.

One of them was his grandfather, but Roy could not recall his name. What Roy remembers from his mother's story was the two were brave bolomen and were also versed in the art of beautifying the Cordillera.

Soon, the brothers were making bolos and knives. They also started teaching their neighbors the skills and smuggling them.

Roy's father was one of the early pandays in the town.

He says he said his seven siblings worked at their father's workshop but it was only him who pursued the business.

Roy says he learned his skills from his father, too.

"I grew up helping my father in his shop. While I was a young boy my father would tell me to do this or do that. So I know everything about blacksmithing," he says.

The frail-need soft-spoken Roy says no one pressed him to become a panday but even when he passed his BS Physics degree at the Pont University, he plunged into blacksmithing instead of becoming a full time teacher.

He fought as a Catholic high school for a year after he graduated from Pont but he said his calling for becoming a blacksmith. He returned to practicing after martial law was declared because business. Boss was down. He taught at the Calasiao High School for a year but was eventually drawn back to blacksmithing.

"Teaching was not for me. I think I was

MOST blacksmiths bear the trade from their parents.

A BLACKSMITH makes a panguhi bolo out of discarded steel.

out out to be a blacksmith," Roy says.

The industry is labor-intensive and everything is done manually.

The shops look like backyards where pieces of metal are piled and random tools, which are used to blade handles, are stacked.

There is an open fire pit (or in Roy's shop, a furnace) where scrap metals are heated until these can be pounded by hand into to the desired thickness, length and shape.

Other farmers say the steel where the blade is hammered into shape used a grinder to smoothen the blade.

Most backyard factories in Bendayan do not use machines and rely on the skills of local craftsmen.

Only Roy owns an electric-operated grinding machine in the area. He bought it a few months ago.

"If I used already considered junk and never ran so I did some fathering and now, it is working. With it, I can shape a metal even if I'm asleep," he says.

When Roy's shop was at its production point, he employed 30 workers who produced different shapes of bolos, chop-tools, kitchen knives, hunting knives, scissors, the so-called Kumbo knife, shovels, saws and many others.

"But I am old now, I can no longer work as much as I do," he says.

He has no son to continue the trade, but his daughters are involved in the business and helping other blacksmiths of Pandayan by buying and selling their products.

Bolos sell for P150 each at the workshops but their prices go up to P300 in market stalls. Made to order blades cost more.

They get orders for special kinds of swords and bolos.

At the rear the houses visited Roy's shop, the blacksmiths were working on different shapes of bolos, following patterns made from cardboard.

PANDAYAN Steven Lina knocks a pan to use in making bolos and knives.

32 families have turned their backyards into workshops

GOINGS-ON

McCann bags BPI account

MCCANN GLOBALHEALTHCARE, one of the top two accounts in the local banking industry, Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI).

The agency was awarded both creative duties for BPI credit cards, personal and AMTO account management and 5 retail products, deposits, BPI Express Online, BPI Direct, and institutional accounts. McCann Erickson remains as the incumbent agency for BPIfirst and BPI Family Savings, which includes housing loans, auto loans and SME.

McCann Erickson's managing director Randy Villar says, "It is a privilege for McCann to contribute to the continuing brand building of an institution that bears a rich heritage such as BPI."

Microtel wins award

THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO PRINCESA, Palawan, recently held its 2012 Cities and Green Awards through its Solar Cities Program at Microtel Puerto Princesa and was recognized as the Greenest and Greenest Area among all the hotels in the city.

The award was received by Microtel Puerto Princesa assistant manager Rose Dasalla.

Puerto Princesa City's Solar Cities Program was launched on May 1, 1 MC to rehabilitate and modify transportation, beautification and sanitation in the city.

Microtel is an international chain of hotels with more than 300 properties in the United States, Canada, Argentina, Honduras, Mexico and the Philippines.

Its other Philippine properties are in Batangas, Boracay, Cebu and Davao.

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AVEO YOUR CHOICE
CHEVROLET

BUSINESS Friday

TOURISTS try their hand at harvesting sweet mangoes.

Mango picking, anyone?

Agri-tourism takes root in Zambales

The Super Mango Agricultural Tour waits to take tourists away

By James T. Gural

CLIMBING TREES, PLUCKING MANGOES, peeling the fruits and dipping them in "bagoong" (fish sauce) on hot summer days spell fun for those living in the countryside.

And that tasty, pleasurable pastime may soon be enjoyed even by those cultivation-incapable for living in cities.

In a bid to promote agricultural tourism in the country, the Philippine Tour Operators Association (Philtoa) and the Philippine Tour Agencies Association launched the Super Mango Agricultural Tour on March 4 during the Zambales Homestay mango festival.

With interest in the summer staple picking up in the Asia-Pacific market, particularly among Koreans, it is about time the national fruit was packaged as a tourism highlight, Philtoa president Cesar Cruz says.

Nothing new

Agri-inclined tours are nothing new.

"You go anywhere in the world, and [there will be] agri-tours. Europe has always been proud of its grapes, vineyards and wines. The United States has Apple-picking tours. Why can't we have that program with our mangoes?" Cruz says.

He says that the domestic market is ready for locals-forward tourism.

Grab-and-sip freebies and chichirias and some technical issues to widen their awareness.

During the launch, Metro Manila-based guests couldn't resist taking home 5-peso old mango seedlings (going for P100 per bundle), mangoes (P35-P50 per kilo, depending on the variety) and bags of fresh vegetables.

According to Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso, around 70 percent of the people in the province are involved in mango farming.

"Mismo sila [mangoes], Deloso says, dominate the provincial terrain.

Other conditions such as "climate, unique mineral resources, and the sea breeze," all come together to make Zambales mangoes the most appetizing in the world, he adds.

The Guinness Book of World Records attests to this. In 1995, it named the Sweet Elsie strain of the Philippine carabao mango variety as the sweetest in the world. That variety originates in Zambales, which touts itself as the second top exporter of mangoes in the Philippines.

Hands on

Those who wish to take part in the Super Mango Agricultural Tour will experience hands-on farm harvesting and view demonstrations on how to propagate, plant and prune mango products at the Ramon Magsaysay Technological University—San Marcelino campus. Of course, participants may leave their fill of mangoes during the tour.

Also, they may try the mango and carrot juices on sale, and shop for other delicacies, such as dried and candied fruits.

Tours will be held during the mango season, which starts in November or December and ends in May, says Ryan Sebastian, senior officer of the Department of Tourism Office of Product Research and Development (DOT-OPRD).

During off-season, officials will continue to conduct tours. This time, visitors will be brought to organic farms and culinary destinations, like Green Garden Farm in Castillejos town, Zambales.

> Tours targeting students and local travelers will be held during the mango season, which starts in November or December and ends in May

This taste of the simple life—hurling for rice eaters and there does—may soon set visitors from P4,000 to P10,000, Cruz says.

"You can tailor-fit the package, depending on your accommodation," he adds.

Top ten

Zambales, a four-hour road drive from Metro Manila, was among the top 10 tourist destinations in the country last year. The province saw an increase in visitor arrivals to 525,271 in 2009, from 308,463 in 2008, DOT records show.

Traditional attractions include the Subic Bay Freeport and beach resorts.

It offers adventure activities, such as surfing and island-hopping. Zambales also has cultural and historical destinations, such as the Casa San Miguel, an arts center, and Nicanor Magsaysay's ancestral home.

"But I believe agricultural tourism will be a key destination," Deloso says.

High yield

Despite the ill blitz-wrath ex destabilizing mango trees in Zambales continue to have high yield.

Tourism stakeholders are confident that agriculture production will thrive, with shrugging over the harsh effects of climate change.

"We're promoting the beauty of having a good environment, we're promoting all these natural products, we're teaching people to be more aware of ... culture," Cruz said.

Cruz hopes to spread the agri-tour program in Zambales to other regions in the country.

"Just like what we did with the culinary program started four years ago," he says, citing the success of Culinarian Tagalog in Batangas and Bicolana, and similar tours being held in Pampanga, Cebu and Iloilo.

PERFORMERS from Masinloc, Zambales take part in the street dancing parade in front of the provincial capitol in Iba during the celebration of the 18th Mango festival in Zambales, which derives a good part of its income from mango plantations.

ZAMBALES, a four-hour road drive from Metro Manila, was one of the top 10 tourist destinations in the country last year and the Mango Festival is one of its many attractions.

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
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Apples Aberin-Sadhwani
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and Ria Francisco-Prieto

PARIS FASHION WEEK

STEPHANIE: Filed for Yves Saint Laurent, creates the ever-evening shirtdress in purple chiffon, with innovative slit sleeves as long as the dress.

It's yesterday once more—everything new is old again

By Larry Lovino
Contributor

FOR JETSETTING STORE BUYERS, the world press, models, hair and makeup stylists who have circled the globe like a tired band of gypsies for three whirlwind weeks, Paris was the fitting finale to the fashion pilgrimages that took them to New York, London and Milan.

Parisian fashion seniors disappointed nor impressed. Designer collections were disconcerting: designs echoing minimalism in proportion and cut, devoid of accessories, details and drama—the loudest debate in the global fashion industry right now.

Young designers he venerable houses of Balmain, Dior, Bodua, Lanvin, Nina to even Balenciaga seemed to repeat or do variations of the best-selling items last summer, only this time using winter fabrics such as wool and tweed. It seemed drama instead of chic. Stars there were new dress.

ITS WEDNESDAY 63

FRANCO: Zaoui for Boyton reinvents the ball-shaped cocktail dress in brown worsted taffeta worn with swirled sweater and silk vest.

OSCARS RED CARPET

Where was black?

Dusty pastels, blushing neutrals make a bigger splash

By Larry Lucido
Contributor

SARTORIAL NEW FASHION styles and statements were evident at the 82nd Oscar Awards in Hollywood.

First was the appeal of very neutral colors like nude and blush. Then the disappearance of big-ticket necklaces and chokers. There were very few traditional ball gowns or long train ceremonial gowns. Instead, the trend was to look simply elegant with no ruffles, shaped nothing or even deep décolletage. No grannies, just tasteful maturity.

Obviously, Hollywood is willing to mature, recession and all.

To look gloriously young and healthy, female actors led by Best Actress winner Sandra Bullock were streamlined, sleek gowns in unadorned silk organza and chiffon in dusty shades of nude, wheat, lavender, periwinkle, greige and sage.

Others were columns of silk charmeuse or shiny duchesse satin—like Sarah Jessica Parker in Chanel, in pale yellow with blue Lesage beaded embroidery. Golden variances were in rainbows, mercury bronze, gold or silver lame or lurex, beaded carefully in caviar or frosted-ice crystals.

The winners

Sandra Bullock in head-to-toe cream silver champagne velvet gowns in contrast with her gold statuette.

Also, Best Supporting Actress Mo'nique in stunning royal blue draped gown, looking as svelte. Distinguished and best film director Kathryn Bigelow in her best evening tuxedo with shawl collar, bow tie and white garden square.

Penélope Cruz wore a structured strapless gown in crimson. Gerry Halliwell's cropped hair was a fresh sight. Her mix-and-match ball gown on Queen Latifah, in pink duchesse satin; Helen Mirren in periwinkle tulle; Jennifer Meehley and Chopard jewels looked swagger-cool.

The B-list

Nicole Richie in her Vivienne Rose silver and black Versace gown, and Maggie Gyllenhaal, who should have ditched the big print satin gown by Rodarte for Nolan, a shrewd choice.

Sarah Jessica Parker in dirty chartreuse Chanel by Karl Lagerfeld was too Mrs. Doubtfire in a loose gown with too many blue beaded appliques on bust...and a fish tail? Meryl Streep, in virginal white, looked scary yet accessorized.

DEMI Moore in Atelier Versace

JULIANNE Moore in strapless silver-gray column by Calvin Klein.

ANNA Kendrick in blushing pearl gown by Elie Saab.

RACHEL McAdams wears a pleated embroidered velvet gown in classic purple by Elie Saab.

SANDRA Bullock's gown has a paper-lace top and patent velvet skirt by Marchesa. Her bag (here) is by Colombina, designed by Tina Hurtado-Ocampo.

SARAH Jessica Parker in pale yellow column with blue Lesage embroidery from Chanel by Karl Lagerfeld.

CAMERON Diaz wears fully beaded champagne-gold Oscar de la Renta.

JENNIFER Lopez in pants and yards of silk organza in pink blush by Giorgio Armani for Armani Prive.

CAREY Mulligan wears 19th-century cascading diamond pendants, by Fred Leighton, contrasting with her raw cropped hair cut over the cape in Hollywood.

KATE Winslet in Stefano Pilati for Yves Saint Laurent.

MERYL Streep in white plunging ornamented by Chris March.

Heavy bling gone, gone . . .

Glitter from past Oscars

GLAMOROUS! Absent in last Wednesday's Oscars were the big-ticket bibs, chokers and strands of enormous gems of Oscars past. (Must be the recession mind-set again.) This bling marked for the extravagance of a bygone glamorous era, this spread, from beautiful bone, opposite hair and minimal makeup studs them real stars of the night. Clockwise from top left: Nicole Kidman drips in diamonds by the yard by Cartier (Oscars 2004); Amy Adams in semiprecious stones-ish necklace by Fred Leighton (Oscars 2009); Drew Barrymore in giant cluster of uncut Bulgari emeralds (Oscars 2000); and Meryl Streep wears vintage sapphires and citrines (Oscars 2004).

It's yesterday once more, everything new is old again

From page C1

ay but still retrieved from the '70s. Nick and "The Jane season's 9th revival reminded except by Christopher Deacon for Balmain).

The many incarnations of Bob Ostbich is the school of feminine draping reaching, ruffles and puffy shoulder was the revival season of most shows from Nina Ricci, Lanvin and Barbas. Dior by Galliano stretched his homey couture show to present more expensive, classic, and multi-toned and ruffled dresses that looked his eponymous line. Kevin Allen 03, has offered most of his new homeur bias cut, away from the body suits, coats and dresses that relaxed his pant two sessions.

Nina Marione Ribeiro for Nina de Mail showed fashions never just like Dress Yes Names by tweaking silhouettes using new colors, volume and oversized, navy fabric combinations such as Ribeiro's new taffeta ball, shaped dress worn with a sweater and Van Noten's outrageous prototypes with chalkdresses.

The Paris collections could be looked into "fashion tribes"—the Gothic like Haider Ackermann, Gareth Pugh and Rick Owens, The Experimentals like Nicholas Ghesquière for Balenciaga, Another big trend were variations of the sheer-quilted coat with fur and feathers.

Hats which were plentiful and innovative was dilled large to resemble pleats at Issey Miyake and Comme des Garcons.

Like the late and great Diana Vreeland said to me when I was introduced by her favorite fashion illustrator, the Filipino, Mossing Obregon, many moons ago, "Since they covered up the American flag, there has been nothing new in fashion. Every-

one tells history or each other's closets. Except for the Japanese in Paris, they offer something different, something marvelous because they want to see the future. And the future of fashion is not about yesterday but about tomorrow!"

CHLOÉ's Viva Heisse has fur back to the '70s with this A-line fitted waist skirt-or-evening dress with voluminous skirt. >>

ALBER Elbaz for Lanvin. Fashion SOS—same old style from last summer, now in winner fabrics >>

JOHN Galliano for Christian Dior rocks the '70s with a dance dress in polished leather even with lace favorites.

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Cyber-shot

Experience the best summer with the new Slim Waterproof Sony Cyber-shot TX5

Dive into the deep waters and view the mysterious underwater world, capture the world through a panoramic point-of-view while basking in the sun, and trek up mountains during your vacation, all with this new Sony Cyber-shot TX5. Sony Cyber-shot TX5's elegant design hides impressive sturdiness and powerful technology.

Power and Precision

Sony Cyber-shot TX5 measures only a slim 16.7mm, making it the slimmest water-proof camera today with Exmor R CMOS Sensor. Make a big splash on summer fashion with the camera's distinctive look & ultra stylish finish. Plus, users may get to choose among the 4 fun colors of pink, red, black and silver to suit any personality.

Bring out the style in any situation

Perfect for travelling during the summer vacation, this sleek and compact camera is protected from water, dust, shock, and temperature.

Created for individuals with an active lifestyle, the new DSC-TX5 can be used in waters up to 3m deep. The intuitive touch screen feature, a mainstay for the Cyber-shot T series, can also be used underwater. Combined with its resistance to dust, the new Cyber-shot camera provides a high level of reliance even in harsh conditions. In addition, the new Cyber-shot TX5 is able to withstand drop shocks from a height of 1.5 m, the usual height from which users hold the camera. It is also resistant to temperatures up to -10°C. With its outstanding water-repellency characteristics and toughness, the Cyber-shot TX5 is suitable for use during activities such as snorkeling and hiking trips in cold or damp locales.

Photographic perfection with the Cyber-shot TX5

With the powerful "Exmor R" CMOS sensor, innovative imaging features like Intelligent Sweep Panorama, Hand-held Twilight, Anti-motion Blur and 10fps High-speed Continuous Shooting are made possible.

The Cyber-shot TX5's revolutionary "Exmor R" CMOS sensor maximizes and utilizes the amount of light received making it twice as sensitive as any usual CMOS sensors. Noise is also dramatically reduced up to 80%, making images cleaner and with higher definition especially when shooting night scenes. Simply select Handheld Twilight mode to get brilliant images even in low light.

Capture the beautiful scene with Sony's innovative Intelligent Sweep Panorama mode. Sweep the TX5 horizontally to capture wonderful landscape shots while sunbathing at the beach or vertically to capture the perfection of breath-taking buildings during tours. This unique function is also available to you underwater so you can fully discover the beauty of marine life.

The Sony Cyber-shot TX5 is certainly the must- have for your best summer ever. Capture fun & exciting summer moments in the slimmest, most stylish waterproof camera that you can bring anywhere, anytime!

Feel the heat rise up to fever pitch, as Sony Philippines kicks off this year's summer season with the launch of their new gadgets. Media guests were geared with the latest digital imaging products as they go through exhilarating challenges stationed around the cool-aid exclusive Shangri-La's Boracay Resort & Spa.

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PLDT

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Exciting Activities for the Summer!

SM Mall of Asia presents exciting activities both adults and kids will definitely love this summer! Now that school is nearly out, bring the whole family over to the lifestyle destination by the Manila Bay to beat both heat and boredom.

Selecta Ice Cream Bar Grand Opening
March 13 and 14, 2010

Watch out for the opening of the coolest hangout this summer: the Selecta Ice Cream Bar! Featuring a wide selection of scrumptious Selecta flavors, you're sure to have a blast enjoying ice-cold treats with your family and friends. And to celebrate the opening of the Selecta Ice Cream Bar, there will be free ice cream for the first 1,000 customers on each day!

Chill out at the Selecta Kids Universe

Active play, unique activity destinations, and hours of plain fun are what await children and the young at heart at the Selecta Kids Universe. Engage in endless space-themed play at the Cosmic Kidz Gym—a challenging five-story cosmic gym filled with amazing themed features, or see a 4D movie at the 5-Rider. Little girls can visit Hello Kitty and her friends at the Sanrio Store, while ice cream lovers can have a refreshing break at The Creamery with sweet and cold ice cream concoctions.

Kids' Earth Hour
March 27, 2010 | San Miguel by the Bay | 8 to 9:30 PM

Get your kids to join the rest of the world in Earth Hour 2010. Kids can now take part in [illegible] climate change by unplugging and playing in an event presented by Sunlogen Rid with the WWF Philippines. Kids can enjoy fun outdoor games such as hopscotch, velcroman, hopball, and adventurous activities like the Rocky Mountain climbing course, the Earth Walk, trampolines, and giant spiderwebs. From 8:30 to 9:30 PM, kids will be treated to an amazing shadow play!

SM MALL OF ASIA
No Other Mall Comes Close
VIVA

THE BIG GET At the Hermès Manila opening is this amethyst crocodile Birkin (Hermès diamonds, 9 carats in matte as a gold-clad Malouf visits).

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Surprise! RP is bigger market for Hermès than India

Formal opening this week showed a stunning amethyst croc Birkin–with over 9-carat diamonds

By Cinche V. Moral

THE BIG GET AT THE OFFICIAL opening of Manila's first Hermès boutique late Wednesday was a stunning 30-cm amethyst crocodile Birkin with over nine-carat diamonds.

The sale? Let's just say, as much as a good, sized Malouf condo.

It's rare that a Birkin even reaches the retail floor in most of Hermès' 339 stores (well, except perhaps at Hermès' Paris home at 24 Rue Mulberry Saint-Honoré, but we'll get to that later).

So even as country manager Marie Kinloch—who gave the interview an exclusive preview of the next day's press...didn't say

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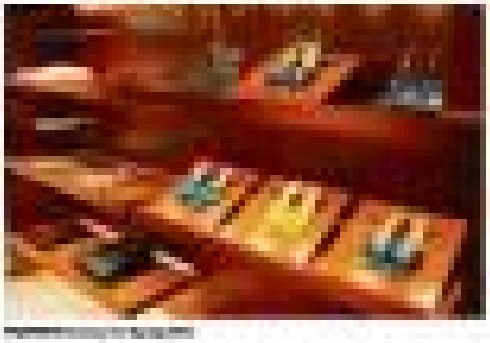
Surprise! RP is bigger market for Hermès than India



Slim's haute couture—from time-bound to timel

Everything you need for work and weekend

YOU

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Summer companions

Some vibrant tropical adventures don't require booking a flight. Opt for sunny bright hues for your summer essentials.

COOL SPECTACLES
Ray-Ban Sunglasses
P5,390.00

GREEN WEAVING
Liberte Bag
P549.75

SEASIDE STUNNER
Tom N' Sand
Bikini P699.75

SHEER FROCK
Angelfish Cover-up P429.75

ARTFUL APPEAL
Angelfish Bangles
P229.75

SEXY WEDGE
Liberte Wedge P790.75

ON DAWN
Sun Kissed Cover Up and Pink Lemonade Maxi Dress

Summer hot list

Get into the spirit of summer with dynamic prints, happy hues and the season's hottest essentials from Robinsons Department Store

Daywear stunners

Candy-colored sweet shades take shape in fun feminine frocks and bright electric colored bags

PRETTY NUMBER
Liberte Dress
P699.75

BOLD AND BRIGHT
Fuchsia Liberte Bag P649.75

RED-HOT
Candy Dress
P799.75

PLAYFUL TOTE
Liberte Bag P649.75

DAINTY FLATS
Zanea Sandals P499.00

ON DAWN
Sun Kissed Maxi Dress

Accessories

Feminine touches to update your wardrobe

LUXE EXTRAS
Angelfish Scarf
P549.75

CLASSIC PIECE
Angelfish Necklace
P379.75

COLORFUL BAUBLE
Ring P129.75

STATEMENT WATCH
Timex Watch
P3,390.00

LOVELY NEUTRAL
Zanea Wedge P849.75

Young selection

Get back to preppy basics for the gals with bright pinks and greens and swirl of floral prints. Opt for sporty-style duds for the boys for a playful mix.

For the boys

PLAYFUL LOOK
6+ Actiwe
Short P588.75

JUMPSUIT WONDER
Grizzly Overalls
P429.75

SHOE GANG
Thomas Snackers
P799.75

SUN PROTECTOR
Coppertone Sport Sunblock

MUST-HAVE
SPF 60 Sunscreen lotion for kids Banana Boat

For the girls

GREEN APPEAL
Grizzly Dress

SHORT CRAZE
Whatever Shorts P549.75

NAUTICAL FEVER
Rocky Girl Collared Shirt P359.75

CHARMING FLORAL FROCK
Sprinkles Dress
P349.75

FUNKY POLKA-DOTS
Pitterpat Sandals
P699.75

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Introducing face, nose, bust lift–without surgery

By Riley M. Carballo
Lifestyle Intern

AT THE RAYA KOREAN RESTAURANT, A kenyo demonstration by Dr. Rhi Jae Woo from Korea on natural facelift gathered nearly a full room 30 minutes before the start.

Host was Kathy Park, owner of the Raya Restaurant (USA) Inc. Ltd. #0000002), and she set the mood by telling the audience she had just had herself treated in November, had previously spent hundreds of thousands on Botox until she discovered the noninvasive type of treatment from Dr. Kim. She showed off her impeccable face that, to those who had known her, was many years younger. Forever young, she quipped.

Dr. Kim is the director of public health and president of the International Oriental Medicine Cosmetic Surgery Society. He's also an CEO and director of Complete Body Oriental Medicine Clinics.

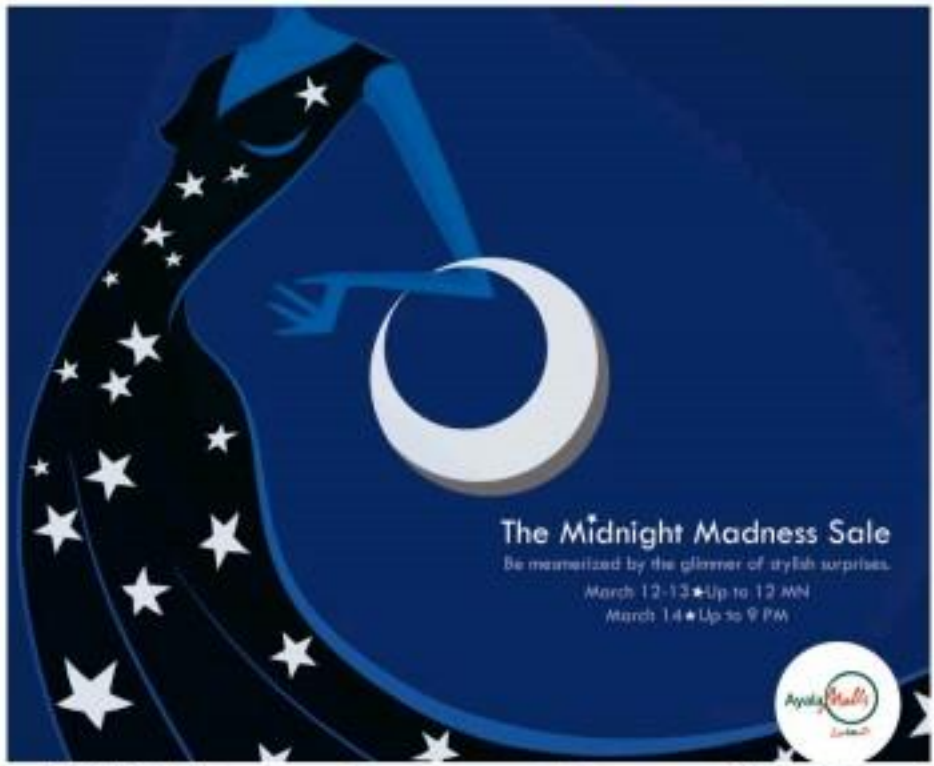
With the aid of an interpreter, Dr. Kim talked about his practice in neurological facelifting that makes use of acupuncture (the insertion of fine needles to stimulate the flow of vital energy at certain points of the body) in combination with chiropractics (the manipulation of the spine, joints and soft tissues) (he earlier in many who have witnessed sports-related ailments.

Both acupuncture and chiropractics, supposedly, are still considered alternative medicine by practitioners of mainstream medicine and science. But Rhi points out that acupuncture operates along that of the principle of tissue regeneration, like laser light surgery.

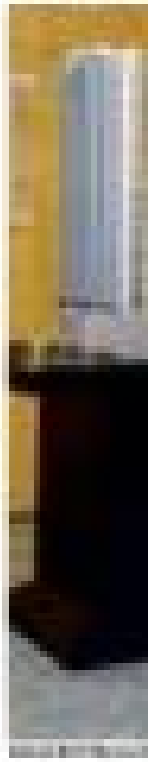
The non-invasive Oriental medicine approach utilizes acupuncture and chiropractic

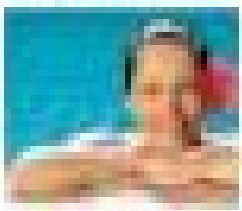
The field of cosmetic beautification and enhancement worldwide has grown by leaps and bounds since a mere 20 years ago when patients were under the knife for facelifts, boob augmentation, nose lifts, chin reduction, hair loss, removal of wrinkles, eye treatments, lot, tuck lifts, obesity, vagina plastic surgery. All these are today possible using his noninvasive oriental medical method, Dr. Kim says.

Most of us in the audience were unsure (plus a sprinkling of men, including actor Tirso Cruz, who wanted treatment of

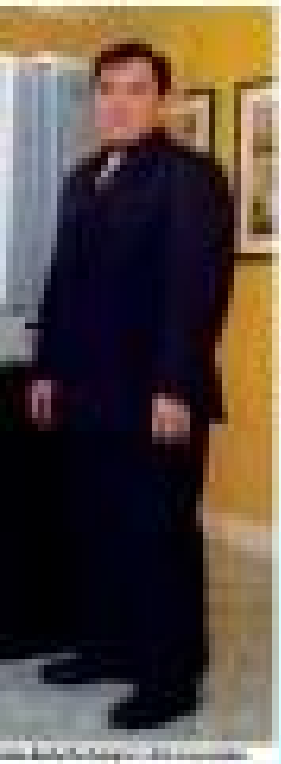


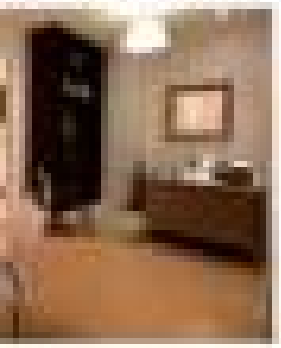
Another success story being written

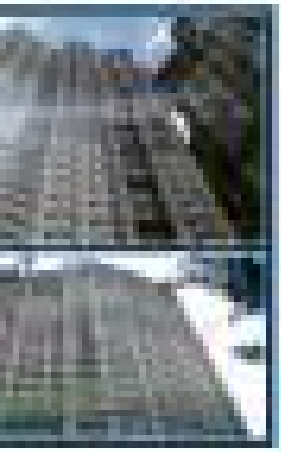


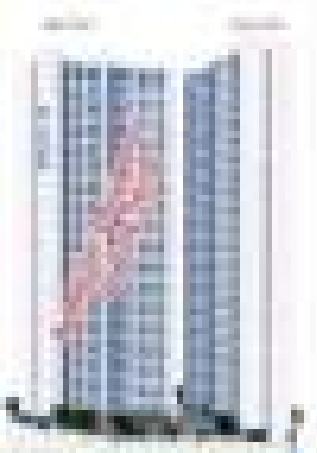


The Grand Towers: Reaching the Top









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For BTI-NCP Permit No. 1597 Series of 2010

Introducing face, nose . . .

From page 1

shoulder pains). Many belonged to the medical field while some in the audience had had unhappy experience with traditional cosmetic surgery. Society figures such as Becky Garcia, Tina Ferreiro, Donna Zaldua, Cory Quirino and Maurice Arcache were present.

Tina Ferreiro had agreed to be the subject of the demonstration. She had been given anaesthesia an hour before as she was so nervous about the procedure. "I don't know why I agreed," she told the audience.

In action

Kim pointed out the areas of her face that needed treatment—her uneven chin alignment, laugh lines that were deeper on one side, wrinkles, a general imbalance of the joints of her upper body.

He started working on the jaw, inserted acupuncture needles with stems inside her mouth and told her to bite on the stems. He later worked on the side of her face that was sagging and had defined laugh lines. With a single fine needle, he started massaging and manipulating her chin. Then it was all over and he asked the audience for comments.

Tina's chin did appear more aligned. The procedure on wrinkles and laugh lines would be more obvious after the swelling had subsided. In a month's time, Kim says, regenerations of tissues would show the difference in her face.

This idea of making the body heal itself is endemic in Chinese and Asian practices. In the Orient there has been traditional resistance to tampering with what God has given. That is why many still prefer going to a "feiai" for body pains, shrinking migraine-head joints for tendon adherents, taking a bounty bath in cognition milk, treating rebels' infections and allergies with guava leaves. Medical tourism records show that the West has likewise been invaded by this thinking.

Foreign visitors to Singapore for cosmetic medical tourism in 2007 was around 200,000, which has more than tripled today. Thailand had around 730,000 in 2008, which now should be around 1.5 millions.

In contrast, South Korea had only 30,000 in 2005 even while the cost of similar treatment is 30 percent less than that in the US, and 60 percent less than that in Japan. The main problem, according to research, is that of language, a matter that Dr. Kim and Kitty in his agent have yet determined to solve.

While new cleverly condemning traditional

DR. KIM Jae Woo

medicine, Kim says the popular Botox is at best a temporary solution and cautions that it will weaken muscles which may cause dysfunction. He says one may look beautiful after going under the knife in one's youth with bad effects appearing years after reaching one's 50s.

We are suddenly reminded of the case of one down-his wife whose problems now has been inadvertently developed by her mom. Kim is not saying no to surgical procedures as you, but just advising one should be careful.

The main theory behind Kim's Oriental medicine practice is yet to see anything symbiotic inside the body. The final shape of our body is formed by membrane, fats, tendons, muscles, blood vessels, skin and our bone structure, which determine the final form of our body. Dr. Kim shows how we can reshape each of our body parts through various acupuncture techniques, a procedure similar to chiropractics, procedures involving entanglement of the muscles and the skin. These will result in delaying aging while becoming healthier at the same time.

It is demonstration of how the body points can rule one's final appearance. He shows how the muscle beside the spinal cord can affect the appearance of one's nose. "After stimulating the muscle two to three times a day for a couple of months, you will notice a marked difference in your nose's appearance."

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LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

My list of dream beauty products

The obsession with whiter, flawless skin is no secret in Asian society

AS AN ADOLESCENT, I HAD A wish list of beauty products that I thought would never get to women. Thanks to technology and fierce competition in the beauty industry, there have been several beauty innovations. But as I grew older, my list has gotten longer.

Here are my favorites (in no particular order) lately.

Lancome Blanc Expert CN Agefight Intense Whitening Spot and Line Corrector. The obsession with whiter, flawless skin is no secret in Asian society. However, we are told since we reach 25-40 this has to take a backseat to anti-aging products as wrinkles and sagging skin are worse than freckles, which can be hidden by concealer anyway. I refuse to compromise and surrender so I apply both serums and night creams.

Kimmy Salas

I'm glad I held out for Agefight, which is designed to restore the brightness of skin, dilute dark spots and fine lines.

The new Blanc Expert CN-White Agefight is a reformulation of the Blanc Expert whitening skincare line that targets melanin in the dermis and epidermis, thus more effective at skin brightening. It leaves skin with better tone, renewed radiance and clarity.

I still apply the Spot corrector for extra-stubborn dark spots and use the Dermvigor serum for skin firming though, as Agefight does not penetrate bone skin. There have been an hesitation for me and minor brown spots have faded. The big ones though just lighten and break, requiring more patience.

Lab 46 Glutacure Total Whitening Underarm Deo-stick, P680. Both underarms have plagued Filipina women. Doctors tell them to stop using deodorant as this is mainly the culprit. What if you seriously have body odor, will you just sit back and sulk?

The stem-bought brands work very slowly and only for mild cases. What about really ds is use clothes to cover underarm skin and let your skin gently exfoliate till it recovers on its own.

If your arc-rakis dark, it can take as long as four years to see results unless you go to a doctor for a steroid cream to speed up the process.

Lab 46 contains potent whitening ingredients designed for those who are allergic to steroid creams. It contains super whitening ingredients like Glycowhite, kojic acid and Arbutin in substantial amounts to encourage skin to renew itself while simultaneously lightening the new skin that emerges. Mine became lighter than the rest of my skin in under two weeks of day and night use.

Air Stocking

This is a cool liquid that quickly dries as a light but full-coverage powder. It takes the

Non-invasive post-partum treatments

MOTHERHOOD IS UNDOUBTEDLY one of life's miracles. The joy it brings to family is immeasurable. Alas! two pregnancies however, I feel years-are-and in need of a makeover.

Personally, I feel there should be a support group for us who have just given birth. Post-partum depression is something we can actually fight by being proactive. Thinking of ways to get our pre-pregnancy body back is a good way to get out of the rut we first only then our body change but so does our skin. Some changes are permanent but most aren't, and that's what we should focus on.

During one of my not-so-good days I call Dr. Aileen Aguilar-Teo and tell her my concerns. Luckily she obliged and even gave me a list of non-invasive treatments I can do. Just knowing there can be something done actually made me feel good. I flew e-mailed my friends who have just also given birth and it excited them. According to Dr. Teo here are the top seven "makeover" treatments that can be done post partum.

1. Warts and skin tag treatments

Most pregnant women develop tiny polyps or skin tags as well as flat warts (verruca plana) all over the face, neck and body especially on folds such as armpits and under the breasts. Electrocautery is the treatment of choice and can be done immediately after giving birth.

2. Pigmentation treatments

High levels of estrogen, progesterone and melanocyte stimulating hormones cause skin darkening especially on nipples, genital area and armpits towards the second trimester of pregnancy. Oftentimes, women also experience darkening of the facial skin called melasma. Discoloration may disappear after giving birth. However, if it persists, treatment is necessary.

Topical bleaching creams containing hydroxy and arbutin may be started after giving birth to facilitate the lightening of areas but stronger depigmenting creams containing hydroquinone, Retin-A and oral whitening tablets may be used after breastfeeding has been completed.

Treatments such as thermoClools and intense pulse light therapy (IPL) may be done immediately after pregnancy to rejuvenate skin but for strong chemical peels and laser peels, it's best to wait for a few months as discolouration may still disappear spontaneously.

3. Hair regrowth treatments

Most pregnant women experience thinning of hair. This condition is known as telogen effluvium and is caused by a shift of the hair to telogen or resting phase (hair shedding).

However, if hair thinning is quite alarming, these treatments may be done. Minoxidil involves injecting it into the scalp to stimulate hair growth and prevent hair loss. This can be done once or twice a week for at least 16 sessions. Hair Rejuvenation laser therapy (570) uses low level laser to stimulate the scalp by dilating blood vessels and increasing circulation to the hair follicles. Twice a week for 20 sessions are recommended and can only be started after breastfeeding.

4. Stretch mark treatments

Stretch marks are something that many pregnant women worry about. These colored indentations on the skin can be found on the abdomen, thighs and breasts. They are the unfortunate side effects of childbirth. This is caused by rupture of dermal collagen due to overstretching of the skin during pregnancy.

Carboxytherapy involves injecting small amounts of carbon dioxide just below the surface of the skin; it is the most new effective because it allows formation and restructuring of the collagen matrix. Weekly sessions are recommended for a minimum of 10 sessions.

5. Cellulite treatments

Cellulite are accumulated buildup of cottage cheese like deposits mostly on the back of the thighs, hips and buttocks commonly seen during pregnancy.

Laser therapy that uses light energy and radio frequency (Velashape) combined with mechanical rollers and vacuum suction is very effective in treating cellulite. It causes deep tissue heating, increasing the metabolism of fat. Treatments can be done once a week for 10 weeks.

6. Body contouring and tightening

Excess weight gain, fat deposits or laxity of skin are common problems post-partum. These fat deposits may respond to diet/physical exercise and dietary changes. But if these don't work, monotherapy combined with radio frequency and ultrasound body contouring treatments may be done.

Radio frequency (accent/thermage) has an additional skin tightening effect to help tone skin laxity in the abdominal area.

It's best to wait those weeks months after childbirth in order to allow the body to heal as hormonal balance before starting these treatments.

7. Spider/varicose vein treatment

Spider veins are collections of little group of capillaries in the superficial layers of the skin. Treatments include laser vein treatment or sclerotherapy. Sclerotherapy is a minimally invasive procedure of injection of a solution (sotradecol) directly into the vein that causes them to fade and disappear whereas Laser vein removal uses light to be absorbed by the blood vessels and causing targeted veins to burn, collapse or shrink. Treatments are done once a month for at least five sessions.

Not all treatments are for everyone but generally these are the changes you'll want to get rid of. Go to your physician and ask if these are for you, although looking at your baby can make you forget all these concerns.

HOT MOM Angelina Jolie

Bleached brows

Thick, defined eyebrows give way to a softer, lighter one this season. But going lighter doesn't mean you should actually bleach your brows bleach. Three easy ways to achieve this look: Instead of picking up your dark brown brows yourself, pick out a brow set that is two to three shades lighter. This gives you a softer look that is perfect when you want to bring out your eyes or lips.

Designer inspiration: Marni

Hot summer makeup

Kelly Min, Make-up Artist

These looks offer a fresh, carefree vibe that's also undeniably sexy

USHER IN THE SUN season with the latest makeup trends.

This summer's makeup sidesteps scrapes eyes and originality as it allows you to play with color and trends without having to look like a rock-candy version of everyone else.

If last season was all about that glamorous, tousling warrior woman, it seems like this season's makeup we were yelling on dark, grimy eyeshadow which completely shouted about (craving the perfect red lips), this summer is all about softness, creativity and optimism.

The trends bring a fresh, carefree vibe that is undeniably sexy...Really, makeup is at least, accessible and hot weather friendly.

Fuchsia lips

Bright pink is just as easy to wear as your favorite red lipstick. It's easily a matter of choosing the right shade for your skin tone. MAC makeup artist Omar Barrientos is recommend Radiant lipstick can make any complexion look fresh and glowing. "If your skin is more on the yellow tone, choose a shade that has more blue pigments, and if your skin has more pink undertones, you should select a yellow-based tone of the lip color."

The key is to create the perfect contrast for your skin.

Designer inspiration: Bottega Veneta

Glowing skin:

There are many ways to achieve glowing skin: a rich moisturizer can create that healthy dewy look; makeup, and an all-white or beige shimmery powder can mimic the look when you need to wear foundation. To prevent skin from looking oily or greasy, the powder should be blended only on the cheekbones, the nose and the bows of the nose.

Designer inspiration: Illamasqua

Edgy eyeliner

This season's liner is all about drawing outside the lines. Graphic lines paired with bright eye shadow look modern and edgy. Experiment by drawing on the corner of the eyes, right under the lower lashes or extending the outer corners of the eyes, making an exaggerated wing. Think modern Morpheus Elizabeth meets graphic cartoon for this trend.

Designer inspiration: Marc Jacobs

Tie-dye shadow

More than an '80s take, this season's blend of similar to watercoloring eye shadows requires a painterly approach to it. To get this right, blending is key as eye shadows look like they are wearing less each other. This is due time to be creative with colors and textures. Just remember, use soft or bright eyeshadow to recreate this look (no dull or dark colors here).

Designer inspiration: Michael Kors

Look good while basking in the sun

SUMMER IS HERE AGAIN. SO now you're counting the long weekends and looking for every excuse to get out. No one will blame you. Except maybe yourself if you are so carefree about your appearance as you are with the season.

I don't want to be the wet blanket just as much as the next girl but a few minutes reading these 10 commandments can at least keep you happy and high long after the season, instead of resenting sunburns and stringy hair after.

1. Colors, colors, colors! Shunn's blocks in summer, not spring, so run vibrant colors like green, pink, gold and those that reflect sunshine.

2. Accessories: Look good and protect yourself at the same time. Try a nice straw hat that blocks the sun from your face and beautiful sunglasses. Designer or fake, will do the trick and you will be ready for fun in the sun.

3. Brush and exfoliate daily to keep skin looking fresh and to give you a feeling of renewal.

4. Shimmer: Forget the tanning bed. This is the summer to be sexy. If you can't get that perfect natural tan, use bronzers and spray on tanners that will create the same look given by a tanning salon, without breaking your budget.

5. Wear sunscreen: The number one rule, not just for summer, is to lather up with sunscreen that has an SPF rating of 15 or higher. The aim is to brighten your skin, protect your beautiful skin now more than ever.

6. Avoid foundations: You'll said. Do you really want to coat your makeup in this sweating heat? If you want to wear foundation, use light and subtle colors or opt for tinted moisturizers that are lighter and gentler on the skin.

7. Eyes that pop: Indigo any situation but if you plan to be near the water or engage in any outdoor activity, use water-proof mascara to stop it from smearing your face. The last thing you want is the look of electric lash.

8. Let your hair loose: Let's face it, hair seems to get oily sweaty and greasy in summer due to the humid temperatures. So instead of creating an uber chic look, be playful and stylish while you wear your hair loose in a messy and wavy style or loose ponytails for a girlish look.

9. Condition. Primp hair! Don't have to avoid it. Deep conditioning your hair weekly since the humid weather can cause frizz so be sure to your hair.

10. Avoid the blues drama. The sun gives you enough burn already. Instead, use mineral-free cosmetics to do the trick.

These tips will surely help you from melting under the scorching sun, but don't forget to enjoy the sun as it is. Take the words of these bus beach babes. Learn their beach beats, secrets and mind you like days do.

"In the bus, my makeup tends to melt, I started using Laneige Water Sapphire loose powder. This not my makeup and prevents me from looking that raccoon look by the end of the day"

—Ana Will, mother/entrepreneur

"I love the Bobbi Brown Tinted Eye Concealer. It covers up dire-condition of pimples and just helps even things out under the eyes."

—Trina Santamaria, entrepreneur

"I have a hectic schedule, so I try my best to get the pampering I would need. But a perfect summer prep, I enjoy having the Renaissance Sheer Lily Facial from The Spa, as this is really good for the skin. I also regularly have the Soil Services (Total LCS Cure) ... Customer pamper, as I always need to be properly groomed for work. And of course the That Boy Shampoo as this treatment is very relaxing."

—Angel Aquino, TV host

"Summer is my favorite time of the year because it usually involves lots of vacations, holidays, beach trips and lots and lots of sun! I love having fun and relaxing with family and/or friends while basking in the sun to achieve a good tan. Here are my beach/tanning essentials:

For hair, I use Human Lovers Nature Hair Mask...I love both variants! They're supposed to be used with a hooting cap or a warm towel mouth like a "heat-aid" treatment but I use them as daily leave-on conditioners. They make my hair soft and smooth all day and do not cause dandruff because they're organic. The Peppermint variety leaves a cool and minty feeling to the scalp. It's very refreshing especially during hot summer days. The Avocado and Goji variants provide intensive moisture for dry and extremely damaged hair.

They are practically priced and they come in big and small sizes (50ml and 300 ml) which are great for travelling or for everyday use. I also use Human Lovers Nature Eucalyptus Hand & Face Lotion. It keeps my hands and face moisturized all day and it does not leave a sticky feeling. It does not rub off on everything I touch and my feet do not slide inside my shoes or slippers because it's easily absorbed by the skin. Perfect for the summer since most people will be wearing slippers."

—Patty Ortega, commercial model

Isabel Baron, Bandstage Pose

BOBBI Brown: tinted eye concealer

PATTY Ortega loves Human Nature Hair Mask.

LANCOME White Sapphire

My list of dream beauty products

From page F1

look of perfectly smooth and sweet-smelled legs so you can wear shorts and skirts all summer long without suffering from the heat caused by stockings.

Syracuse's new dry, dull skin to a lighter, even-toned shade while Cocoa gives that get-greater bronzer tan. Consumers are longing to get.

The love part is that it is so, targeted so there is no fear of splotches of color running down your legs when you get hit by rain or sweat. It covers mosquito bites, childhood scars, veins and other discolorations.

Hint: Avoid wearing white shorts as it may discolor with friction.

Dramas begin Inner Work. I finally took the plunge and got hair extensions, which I really love as it looks real, shiny and luscious. Of course, there's a but-factor. One cannot use an ordinary comb or brush as one ends up uprooting most of one's hair and winning in pain when one tries to smoothen things out.

There is a brush made specifically for hair extensions but not only does it cost P2,500, it is also always out of stock so I was told to just wash and wear. After a week, my hair looked really scraggly and needed brushing which was a total source of PMS-per-minded (HS) strands, so I set out to find a brush that would untangle and smoothen my hair plus reach my scalp without soaking my hair bulb.

I found Denman's Tangle Tamer, which is designed to tame the tangles out of little girls' hair without hurting them, it works perfectly at less than one third of the price.

Permanent brushes and Air Smoking are available at Watsons and Rustans. For the whitening deodorant, call (632) 8992642 or 6006321.

HAIR extension beauty Jessica Simpson

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new!
PICTURE PEOPLE

Int'l makeup artist Klexius Colby in Manila

GET this free oversized with a minimum P1,500 purchase of Lola products from March 12 to 21.

SHOPPERS AT BEAUTY by SM will have the rare opportunity to learn the beauty secrets of Hollywood's A-listers as international makeup artist Klexius Colby makes a stop in Manila for workshops for Lola's 3rd, dicted to Love collection. It will also give them the opportunity to discover this new line by Lola cosmetics.

Having created indelible images of Madonna, Janet Jackson, Jennifer Lopez, Kim Medcalf-ners, Klexius Colby has emerged as one of the top artists in his field. In Lola's inkdicted to Love workshops, he will share trade secrets and expert tips to help fashionistas get the season's trendiest looks using this luxurious and innovative cosmetics brand.

The 3dicted to Love workshop will make a first stop at Beauty by SM Department Store in SM Cubao on March 14. It will then proceed to the SM Megamall's Department Store on March 16, SM Makati on March 19, and make a final stop at Mastermind at the SM Mall of Asia on March 20.

60 minutes will be at 2-4 p.m. Attendance is open to the public.

More exciting treats await shoppers: a 20-percent discount on all Lola Cosmetics on March 14-21, plus free wristlet for every P1,500 minimum purchase. SM Advantage, Privilege and BDO Rewards cardholders can avail of the wristlet plus a free Lola lip gloss key chain for every P2,000 purchase.

Lola Cosmetics has been on the forefront of the highly competitive beauty arena for nearly a decade. The demand for this brand has grown globally to serve 14 countries spanning Australia to Asia and Europe.

Produced in the USA, Lola Cosmetics takes pride in discovering new prestige palettes, ingredients and elements. This brand is dedicated to finding beauty solutions that promote the joy and appreciation of the art of makeup.

The Lola consumer is stylish, sexy and sophisticated. She is fearlessly independent and always on the pulse of the latest trends and fashion forecasts.

Lola Cosmetics' vast spectrum of products and colors for eyes, cheeks, lips and décolletage allows women to transform according to their every beauty whim.

Lola Cosmetics are available exclusively at Beauty by SM at SM Department Stores in SM Cubao, SM Megamall and SM Makati, and at Mastermind at the SM Mall of Asia.

LOLA mini lip gloss balls double up as key chains.

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Skin multivitamin

Retinol Naturals Skin Care offers Moringa-O skincare products. Moringa-O is formulated from a combination of natural oils, vitamins and minerals which rejuvenate, nourish and protect skin. The products contain malunggay, olive oil and sunflower oil, which yield Vitamins A, E and C, which actively keeping skin moisturizing and radiant. Products include Moringa-O body lotion, beauty bar and age-defying antioxidant body lotion. Call 8420902 0817.

Mouthwash in a gum

Lotte Xylitol Dental Health has xylitol, a natural sweetener derived from birch tree bark and the fiber's of many fruits and vegetables, that prevents plaque and cavity build up. Chew two pellets of sugar-free xylitol four to five times a day for healthier teeth and gums. It comes in Blueberry Mint, Fresh Mint and Lime Mint in blister packs and bottles.

Styling brush collection

Denman Bluenette Styling Brush Collection in red and matte black is studded with "diamante" to add glam to every brush stroke. The collection has anti-static rubber pad to provide maximum grip and control while smoothing hair. A handy partner is the Luxury Grooming Comb made of ebonite and hand-crafted from natural rubber. Available at Cosmore and Beauty Bar. Shortbreading Russian Marketing Corporation.

Feet care for women

Kiwi, the brand that has become synonymous with shoe care, has foot care products that allow women to wear whatever fashionable shoes without the pain. Kiwi's newest product is its Smiling Feet Gel Cushion, a soft foot padding that gives comfort and protection to specific parts of feet. The innovative pyramids super-fine fibre for excess air it reduces the incidence of blisters and calluses by protecting feet against friction and pressure from the speed rubbing of shoes.

Because the cushions are made of transparent gel, the product blends in any kind of shoes—promoting comfort and protection without sacrificing style.

With Smiling Feet, there is no need to stash away those fashionable shoes. Women can now wear any type of shoes they want. With this product, women are assured that their feet feel comfortable at all times while being protected from blisters and calluses.

Traditionally, women would use band-aids to prevent blisters and burning pain brought about by unnecessary or too much direct contact of shoes and skin. But Smiling Feet is a more sophisticated solution. It comes in four variants, gives comfort to specific points of the feet: in the insole, heel liners, the ball of foot, and in between toes.

Smiling Feet is available in leading department stores, beauty shops and drugstores nationwide.

Nihongo Fiesta celebrates J-POP culture at the SM Mall of Asia

Haseo Ms. Gel Bizarro and Mr. Alfred delos Reyes with Japan Foundation's Tsuyoshi Hibi

Hallyupoos on the SM Mall of Asia had a rare glimpse of another side of Japanese pop culture during the recent Nihongo Fiesta 2010 at the SM Mall of Asia.

Many of us associate Japanese pop culture with anime and manga, but this event project between the Japan Foundation Manila and the SM Mall of Asia in cooperation with Cosa Pacific invited shoppers to showcasing contemporary Japanese fashion and music.

A fun and fun Japanese and Filipino Street Fusion Exhibit captured the trendy and cutting characters that dominate the streets of Tokyo along with them the interpretation of street fashion through the patriotic eyes of Filipino designer and style blogger Camila Zamora van Breden. The exhibit also made a tour of SM's premium malls in Tan Block in SM City North EDSA and in SM Megamall.

The hallways of the SM Mall of Asia were transformed into a paper crane wonderland where many participants showcased their Tokyo inspired street fashion outfits in the Japanese and Filipino street fashion.

Many Moves emerged the winner with his edgy style and was awarded a trip to Japan for 2, while Cool Lumbay placed second, and Patrick Nash (Secret Part) 3rd Singson, on the other hand, was chosen as the 1st Fashionista. All winners were awarded cash prizes and Japanese fashion products. Japan Foundation Manila Director Tsuyoshi Hibi, fashion designer and style blogger Camila Zamora van Breden, actor Lo Ann Bautista and GM VP for Marketing Millie Sioson were among

The Japanese and Filipino Street Fusion Exhibit and Contest is ongoing at The Block in SM City North EDSA until March 8 and will run at SM Megamall on March 9-15.

(From Left to Right) Japan Foundation Business Director Yuko Hirano, Japan Foundation Director Tsuyoshi Hibi, DPVP for Marketing Millie Sioson and SM Mall of Asia AVP for Operations Steven Tan

the judges.

Last during the evening, the fun triggered by the Hallyupoos emerged with a Street Dance featuring the groundbreaking Japanese pop-and-rock Sami Dancer Ando. The all female group with a world wide cult following has toured with iconic groups like

The winners for the Nihongo Speech contest Sonny Yang, Marella Agcaoili, Sandra Jane Tuanda, Ken Mission, Judith Maria Pablo, Yvonne Peters and Cherie Pamela with Minister Phumiko Kato, Japan Foundation director Tsuyoshi Suzuki, and GM VP for Marketing Millie Sioson

Speech contest winner Sandra Jane Tuanda from Ateneo de Naval declares, he was the lowest Filipino ever top to Japan for 2 weeks trip. Ken Mission from La Salle University under Language Course from the Philippine Institute of Japanese Language and College won a Special Jury Award under the Japanese Proficiency Test Level 1 category. Interest have top contestants from Ateneo de Naval, Singson and the Japanese Division with ten more. The Philippine Embassy from which the Japanese Don't Know, while Minister Agricultural Affairs Section of Agricultural Affairs Section of Agricultural Affairs Section of

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Getting in step with Franco Sarto

The Italian shoe designer has opened his first Asian boutique in Manila

By Cinche V. Moral

IF IT'S THOSE GORGEOUS BUT OUTRAGEOUSLY UNWEARABLE shoes you want, take your money elsewhere because Franco Sarto is now making them.

SETTING IT

LACOSTE

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THE POWER PLANT (ROCKWELL CENTER)
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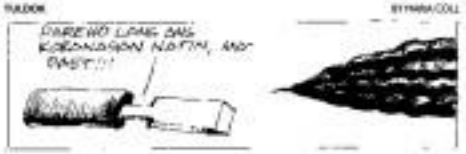

SEH

BIRD MACHINE

SHERWIN'S LADDOON

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCE DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This year you have prospects, only fought resources could will ever significant with your to-do list. Remember to be kind, you might make more time alone. If you might it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is going to be a popular year for you. Not to the point of hiding, that really annoyed and inconsiderate, shows of consideration. Be happy.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Without question, you have a chance to improve your reputation this year. You can receive unexpected reward from your own group. This year is a crowning point for you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Chances to participate in your regular routine and satisfaction will come to you this year. Don't work, many of you will have a chance to travel. It's time to socialise your horizons!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Girls, parties and lovers have always will come to you this year. Remember you have the ability to make a difference in people's lives. Be careful of unexpected circumstances of others. Keep your emotions open!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Partnerships and close friendships individuals will improve this year. This is also a good year for you to develop new passions/ideas, whether they are personal or professional.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Look for ways to organise your life this year. Important data carefully noted. Review your finances and budget a little more.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Boundaries, love affairs, romance, playful times with children, sports and rich social occasions will make this a fun-loving year.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a wonderful year for you to your personal life. Anything having to do with home, family and entertainment is central and will be rewarding. Be generous.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your optimism will give this year a big boost in many ways. You will have an important chance to use the power of positive thinking.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Be there if you will make many events this year. Your popularity is increasing by leaps. Many of you will be spending more as well as buy beautiful things. You might just feel rich!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a year when social knowledge of years you have had since 1908, therefore, make the most of it! Lucky Jupiter is in your sign, bringing you good fortune, increased confidence and positive 'ego'.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	5	8	9	7	4	3	1	6
4	1	6	3	5	8	9	2	7
3	9	7	6	1	2	4	5	8
6	4	3	8	2	1	7	9	5
8	7	1	4	9	5	6	3	2
9	2	5	7	6	3	1	8	4
1	3	9	5	4	6	2	7	8
7	8	2	1	3	9	5	6	1
5	6	4	2	8	7	9	4	3

Conceptis Sudoku By Dan Gulli

	1	6	9					5
9	3					2		
		8						
1			2				6	
		7		8		9		
	5				9			1
						4		
	9						2	6
2					5	8	3	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

Getting in step with Franco Sarto

GISELLE leather wedge with criss-cross upper in black and tobacco

From page G1

"I love imagination, except when it makes the shoe unwearable. Then I forget about it," Sarto said through an interpreter.

The Italian cobbler-shoe designer, whose eponymous women's footwear brand was introduced in the country a year ago by Ilumen Specialists Inc., is a believer that style and comfort should go in perfect.

"I don't agree with women who say that for as long as a shoe is beautiful, it doesn't matter if it's uncomfortable. I don't subscribe to that. The woman has to be able to walk," he said. A good designer, he stressed, should be able to mix style and comfort.

Sarto, 60, was born in Lido, a town 20 km from Venice, to a family that's steeped in Italy's shoemaking tradition. At a young age, he learned the craft of shoemaking and all the techniques that make Italian footwear the yardstick against which all good shoes are measured.

In his 20s, he left home for Stra, the shoemaking center of Italy, to pursue his career. On a trip to the US some 20 years ago, the idea to make shoes under his own name was hatched. The Philippines is Franco Sarto's first market in Asia.

With the country's strong affinity with the West, the owners of the brand feel that the Philippines would be the best starting point in Asia. Sarto himself thinks anything that's successful in the US could be successful here. "I see that women are fashionable and very updated. I see no difference between women here and women in the West."

WEDGE heels with multicolored straps

Revered

Sarto designs his shoes in Italy but they're manufactured in China. This is purely for financial reasons, he said. "That doesn't make it less Italian. It's planned in Italy out of my mind and out of my life's background. But we have to consider the cost. People think this is made in Italy because it follows the same Italian tradition and techniques."

SLINGBACK in Old Wood leather

The man said Italian footwear is revered for its craftsmanship expertise and the country's great tradition of good taste, culture and design.

"It's in the eye, for details, the materials. Others may do the same, but probably they're not as meticulous. The difference is the expertise and know-how. They may have the same ingredients but it's how you put those together that makes the difference."

As for him, it's his passion and experience that he feels drives, pushes him over other so-called shoe designers. He doesn't just design, he draws how to make the shoes.

"Behind the branding, there's the process. You can't buy experience," he said.

Franco Sarto is only one of the footwear brands under Brown Shoe Company Inc.'s umbrella, which includes Naturalizer, The Spiga, Life Stride, Dr. Scholl's, all brands that are known for comfort. For Franco Sarto, the tagline is "European fashion, everyday comfort," and is sold at Greenhills 3, Eastwood Mall, SM Megamall, Ayala, and Fashion's Market, Shangri-La and Alabang.

"It's a value-price item," said Marc Berges, Brown's VP for Far East Operation. "Franco Sarto's last (the acid facts on which a shoe is modified) is different. They can copy the design but not the last. Others just can't get it quite right."

As for Sarto, he claims's mind being copied within the shoes fans

FRANCO Sarto has a special liking for wedge heels. He says they make women look tall and sexy without the discomfort

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"A lot of films only look good on paper, but not this one."
- Fidel Medel, PEP.ph

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- PDCP.CEB

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- Pierre Bouiss, Xavier School Faculty

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- Consistently on top of his class from elementary to college, graduating cum laude of the Mapua University and attending law school with distinction at the Ateneo de Manila.
- Chief Operating Officer (COO), Warner Philippines, Inc., General Manager of Green Earth Power and Energy Corporation and COO of its three sister companies.
- A caring husband and a loving father to his three daughters. One of his daughters, Nina Kei, has Down's syndrome.
- A Certified Balloon Artist (CBA) and inspires his patients to live and wears costumes on children's parties.
- An honorary president of Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines, he and Ambassador in securing Pres. Proclamation No. 107 which declares the month of February each year as the "Down's Syndrome Consciousness Month."
For more details, please visit www.happiest-pinoy.com
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Jollibee offers heavenly meals for Lent

As Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season, we too begin observing meaningful and rich traditions that can elevate our culture and faith.

There are a number of religious practices that we engage in, like the customary streak of fasting and abstinence and the usual Holy Week activities like the Stella Iglesia to celebrate the season of Lent.

For most Filipinos, it is also the opportune time to be with family members as they welcome the break from office work or school. Be it simply attending a Sunday mass to more religious practices like the Pabasa, families get together not just in keeping with tradition and faith but also to bond and spend quality time.

And Jollibee is one with Filipinos in the observance of Lent and the celebration of family togetherness by offering those heavenly meals appropriate to the times.

There's the Jollibee Crispy Bangus Rice Meal that comes with plain rice and a slice of tamales for only P82 for the 1 pc. meal and P98 for the 2 pc. meal. You and your family can also head to Jollibee for an early breakfast before heading to church with the Crispy Bangus Breakfast Meal that comes with garlic rice and an egg for only P66. Just add P10 and you can get a regular softdrink to go with these rice meals.

Aside from these delicious dishes, those looking to savor a convenient and satisfying snack can go for the Jollibee Tuna Pie. Priced at only P30, with and P40 for the value meal, it's the perfect Lenten treat to share with friends and family.

With these great-tasting and affordable offerings from Jollibee, you can enjoy heavenly treats while actively staying true to your Lenten commitments.

BUTCH and his wife Cris Abad Santos Albert hold hands while listening to the touching speeches of their lovebase. Here's to more wedding anniversaries!

AMIN and Lawrence Yao

TALENTED Repertory Philippines artists Hans Bolanos, Ajoni and Carlo Bermudez

COUPLE of the night Butch A. and Cris with Darry and Marivic Garcia, Pastor Gus Liang and his wife Sally L.

THE COUPLE's son Carlo Albert

MEN OF STATURE. Rally Lizmas, Negros magazine's editor in chief Jose Izquierdo and Carlo Lopez

WENF Yulo, Mark Geisler, Jovie Puggoy and Mabel Villalobarro

Fila couple celebrates 16 happy married years

DOREEDOS TY and movie stars Angel Aquino and Adrian Vargas (right) with Flor Colpito

NEO Cornish Mags boutique image model Nes Peralejo and Dr Nick Ivan Follido

JASON and Connie Barrozo

COLUMNIST Nancy Ybarra with Mags Boutique's fine couple, Mags and husband John Cua

KARLA Nancy Chiong Pineda, Eric Ting and Kristine Joan Baker

THE ULTRA GLAM MEDIA scene of Manila is treasured. I, which in many cases also designs, breathes off power and style, dabbles.

It's no wonder that Butch Albert and Cris Abad Santos, the couple behind the Fila sports fashion brand, celebrated their 16th wedding anniversary, pulanggan.

The event was relaxed and unpretentious. It started in to-wee wee part midnight and continued round four wee-wee and a super-meticulously prepared menu by Nonie Puno Productions, posted chicken roulade, assorted meats, beef caldereta, grilled sinuegs and baked mussels and clams, and a humongous cake designed by Top Cakes, which was creamy and began-to-chook, adding a touch of fun to the fabulous exotic flowers which were tastefully arranged by Cris herself.

The 40 invitees included the couple's son Carlo Albert, 12th mom Pamela Locsin-Albert, sister Cris Abad Santos and best friend Irene Yulo.

At the clock struck 12, the lovely couple said their goodbyes and slipped away for their 16th honeymoon. I asked where they would be going and Cris answered laughing, "Hey, tips are needed."

It was a fitting ending to their fun celebration, with the invitees having a blast while partying, pulanggan.

Fun-filled

Bright, sunny blue skies, carpets of soft green grass and the cool breeze softly blowing at the posh Santa Elena Golf Club. Those were the fantastic elements of the sweet event of well-loved businessman Bienvenido B. Tantoco Jr. for the Philippine Tatler's first cover of 2010, written by Eileen Kate and photographed by Frank Hoschanel, dahlings.

Ambassador Tantoco, who was very happy with his January cover and feature story, later thanked the luxury lifestyle publication by hosting a super fun but appreciative lunch recently. It was given to Tatler's managing director, Mamel Mattel, her husband, top candlelegist Randy Francisco, their eye-catching daughter Isabel, and the whole Tatler ed. mental team. It was held at the penthouse of Bamboo Village, located at the same place Ambassador Tantoco was photographed, the Santa Elena Golf Club.

The Tatler team included its editor in chief Ashton Ian Mapua, the society editor (who else but snort), editor at large Rita Barrameda, features editor Vicki A. de Leon, editorial assistant Joan Pasagui, online editor Mario Villamor and special projects coordinator Anna Gonzalez.

Also present were the seven Tantoco clan, from children to in-laws, led by the brilliant Shelly Tantoco.

The buffet, superbly prepared by the chef Joseph Go, included rice, soup and chicken relleno, beef in salad, sauteed mushrooms and calorific dozens of desserts, among others, plus their renowned cocktails before which disappeared faster than you could say "Tatler" dahlings.

Apparently, the ambassador dishes up there every Sunday for lunch to dig into his favorite Hainanese Chicken.

Great company, relaxed atmosphere, super food shared with cold beer or alcoholic juice, pulanggan. These are the perfect ingredients for a lazy Saturday out of town, pulanggan.

New Mags outlet

Popular throughout the South and Luzon, Mags boutiques opened another outlet at the annex wing of SM Fairview with a glitzy, eye-studded affair. The ribbon-stepping was led by the Queen herself, Imogen, adorable Nina Perdejas, and Mags Lopez Colpitt-Cua, so less, pulanggan. They were joined by Miss Earth 2008 Karla Paula Henry, her sister Alfred Vergara, supermodel and TV host Angel Aquino, actress Chant Planella, and young actress Sara Shora.

"It's the Year of the Tiger, so animal prints are in in. Also, reptile prints and furry head bands will make a splash. We've got exotic mots of the 'don't look' throughout the year," said Mags. "I have a personal passion for fashion, so this undertaking is a natural progression for me."

"The label is very different from those that I've endorsed in the past. Mags Boutique products are made just for women, and cater to their whims," said Penalejo.

Mags purchases merchandise from Asian countries. "The trend is always ahead abroad, that's why."

She is married to business magnate Oliver John Cua. They've blessed with an all-male brood. "I'm inspired by women in love and happily married to my husband. Tantoco wise, I have been lucky to have competent staff running our branches. It's all I can ask for," said a happy Mags, pulanggan.

Mags Boutiques are in SM City Iloilo, Limketkai Mall in Cagayan de Oro City, SM Dadiangas, Alabang Boutique Avala Center Cebu, SM North Edsa, SM Fairview, SM San Fernando (Pampanga) and SM Davao.

Gate One is here

Cinderella Marketing Corp. (CMC), the holder of such franchises as Zipatu, British India, Puerto Caribe, Stafford, Debenhams and Gaelia, has a new global brand under its wing—Gate One, a contemporary fashion brand for the dynamic young.

Gate One started in 1996 from one of the world's most beautiful avenues, Champs Elysees in Paris, France. It has since spread shops across the globe.

Now, Gate One is in Manila. It has opened with its Spring/Summer collection at Greenbelt. The looks show us layouts in the collection had our town's fashion connoisseur young movers and shakers all dolling up to the show and grabbing the hip, colorful and eye-catching clothes.

Check out Gate One at Greenbelle flanking Teton Centre, Greenbelle SM Megamall, Greenbelle Mcinnall and Greenbelle Glorietta.

JOEY Tanyag, Noemi Reyno, Mags Cua, Mitchell Martel, Angel Aquino, Editha Reyno and Sherwin Cua

JICA and Junie Connor

CINDERELLA Marketing Corporation VP for merchandising Nelsie Santos and Cinderella president Arthur Coronel (right) flank image model Kristine Hermosa, wearing Gate One.

PHILIPPINE Tatler publisher Imee Marcel Francisco, Bienvi's Commercial Corp. president Nasty Tantoco and her father, ACC board chair, Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco Jr.

MICHAEL T. Hoang, special assistant to the NCC president, and Tatler's Marie Villamor

BEAUTIFUL COUPLE. Corinne Yu, marketing communications manager, Footwear Specialty Retailer's Inc., and husband, Bistro Superstores Inc. president Dennis Santos

Bud Dark G Group director Marilen Valbuena and Bienvi's Commercial Corp. executive VP Karen Huang

CEBUANA Courier Officer Gaye Vibiro and Nonette Enriquez

MARITESS T. Enriquez of Bienvi's wellness and Tatler editor at large Mia Borromeo

TJ HOUSTEBEE president Patrick Jarmie

CINDERELLA'S Nathalie Santos Po and Malou de Peralta with model Claudia Sosa wearing Gate One

JING Bernardino, brand manager for Gate One

MIMI Hoang, Alex Van Hagen and Tatler editor-in-chief Annie San Diego

OVERHEARD

ABC Bakhita on his roles as Oscar on love: "[It's] as old experience because you're out there, but it isn't about you.

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The Princess diaries

From page H1

Visiting relatives are, it's no surprise, if this doing still life paintings, scenes from my travels abroad," she said.

Her bedroom reflects her own personal design aesthetic, she explained.

"The house is so not me. It's very cool house would be modern minimalist, more refined. It would have a more organic feel. I'd like the floor to be wooden and I could sit or walk barefoot on it."

Personal space

In the meantime, Princess decorated her personal space in the likeness of her Aztec home.

"My bedroom is super comfy. It's the coziest nook in the house. It's so like a cave," she said.

The room used to be painted maroon, until she used online tips that color makes people hungry or keeps them restless. "I couldn't sleep for a while, so I changed the walls to beige."

It's an airy yet dream ambiance, also spiced up by the plush with white drapes and exquisite pieces from Europe, like Western

FAMILY portrait done in oil includes Princess Tania's sister Cosi too.

ANTIQUE cushion from Europe requires a global effort in the home.

continues to rule and is much loved by Cosi.

"Since the European pieces are from my parents, I displayed souvenirs from my travels along with my paintings there, to give it my own touch."

She's especially proud of the Guest sitting corner in her room —not because of the designer couch but because of the cute petal throw pillows the girl from a Barkadahouse.

"The pillow cover we locally made," she pointed out.

Centerpiece of the room is her four-poster bed.

"Ever since I was a kid I've always wanted my room to look like a spa. I've been pampering myself with home massages since I was 10 years old," Princess said.

Apart from getting massages, she starts the day or matches DVDs of her favorite TV series "Mad Men," "Criminal Minds," "24" and "Lost" when at home.

Chick flicks

She's also hooked on chick flicks and food soaps.

"I try to avoid stress so I eat those go-nos. Am running into a grandmother? She cocktailed in food.

She said she learned to cook and bake by hanging out with her parents in the kitchen when she was a kid. The afternoon of the Cosmo Xmas visit, she whipped up baked spaghetti.

She hopes to invest in a restaurant someday to put to good use

HIMARE Princess plays with her nephew's favorite inflatable castle on open-door backyard.

SHE always wanted a four-poster bed (like one's from Bitan/Aliwa).

her culinary skills.

She recently put up a Yugioh (fiction yugioh) franchise at Shangri-La mall. She's also selling fashion accessories online from her multiply and Facebook sites.

"I'm quite business-minded. I hope to follow in my dad's footsteps," Princess said.

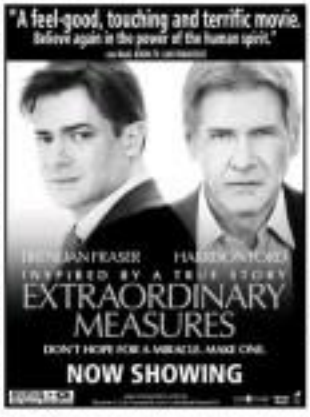
Perhaps it's safe to say she's the charmed life of, well, a princess. But at home, she needed, she shows stress and personal woes. Tan super-stressed. I just went shorter and dippier."

Another favorite home activity is swimming, and playing with nephews Blake, Isaac and Wilson.

"I play with them all the time. I spoil them, but their moms say don't. Makes money the kids to know the value of hard-earned money."

Mom is exactly how they were raised, Princess said.

CHERRY'S girl. She has earthen from father Oscar, artist knows office. Desk is from Julian's.



CHERRY Pie shoots for the TV commercial titled "Pulitikus Balasa," launched recently for the celebration of Women's Month.

Cherry Pie speaks for women's rights

IT'S ONE OF CHERRY PIE HIZON'S most beautiful roles in an acting career that boasts not a few significant characters, from the lesbian daughter in "Kaya" to the no-nonsense nurse in "Heaven Child."

The award-winning actress was recruited by Unilever Philippines, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija and Ogilvy Communications to star in the TV commercial dubbed "Pulitikus Babae"—launched recently for the celebration of Women's Month.

Eye-opener

The campaign, which seeks to create awareness on the struggles of rural women, is an eye-opener for Pinache who is no stranger to different community causes.

"I've always been quietly involved in various advocacies and I am interested in Oxfam's projects, from environmental concerns to women's rights," she explained.

Pinache, who's also active in the movement to protect children who are in conflict with the law," said she had learned a lot from shooting the commercial which also features its actual scenarios. Human Rights and Mar Roxas a.k.a. Jansen Change.

"I was enlightened. In the city, inequality is not as big a problem. It's sad that women in rural areas still have to fight for their contributions...so the household women, for example—to be appreciated," she noted. "In rural communities, men decide for the family and women are not consulted."

"There is a need to bridge the gap between urban and rural women, she said. Hopefully, the ad will inspire city women to support their sisters in the provinces."

However, she also realized, from

THE campaign seeks to create awareness.

STARS FOR OTHERS

Oxfam studies, that there are instances of gender inequality among urban poor communities and city-dwelling, conservative middle- and upper-class families.

She agrees with the organizers who took pains not to make the commercial seem anti-men, though. "We recognize that both men and women have roles in society," she said.

Like the organizers, she found the commercial's humorous handling of a serious topic "more effective."

"It's informative and socially relevant, but at the same time it's offbeat ... It's conceptualized like a sitcom which can help catch people's attention," Pinache said.

Michel Pangilinan-Arenas, managing director of Harrison Communications, which produced the commercial, said that their goal was to "present reality without condemning and belittling men."

Arenas said the organizers picked Pinache as spokesperson "because she has embraced the basic wholeheartedly. As actress, she has played submissive roles onscreen."

Pinache is part of two indie films: Lyndon Ramos' "Guy," which takes on trafficking; look at the electoral process, and Dan-del Santos's "Dagli (and ng Kaplet)," which celebrates the basic goodness of people.

She's juggling mainstream projects, too: the ABS-CBN soap "Habi" and the comedy movies "How Gimme the Bread" and "Making Kuripatal."

She said: "It's exciting that I get to play different roles." Or, and offscreen, that is. *Beyond San Diego Ar*

"IT'S informative, socially relevant," says Cherry Pie of the commercial.

PRINCESS Violagos dolls up in a bathroom decked with Hollywood-style vanity mirror.

The Princess diaries

Violagos' baby fills her personal space with art, beautiful objects

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rudel Ruaro

GMA 7 TALENT PRINCESS VIOLAGO made quite an impression when she first burst into the scene as the stars-are-rising rowing reporter on "Ü Films" four years ago.

She fit the role of "social butterfly," living up to her royal moniker quite effortlessly.

Now that she's back in the fold after a two-year hiatus, the "Bubble Gang" star wants to live down the "Princess" persona.

Living in a spacious home teeming with Lladro figures, as well as antique religious sculptures, doesn't quite create the posh image, though.

"It say that the Violago home is expansive is an understatement. The two-storey, 6 residence occupies 1,000 square meters. Total lot area is 1,200 square meters.

"My mom and brother Anthony decorated the place with the help of interior designer Tony Ashtaro," Princess related. "It's very European."

The house serves as material with antique items from Russia, along with a 200-year-old frames Mrs from France.

His father, businessman Oscar Violago, said that his wife is deeply religious and has filled every nook and cranny with shelves from all over the world.

Princess believes she inherited her artistic streak from her mom.

"My mom is very creative," she said proudly.

Rose Stassen, who's undergoing treatment for colon cancer, is Princess' pillar of strength. "My mom's illness has brought the family closer," said the youngest child in the family.

The clan is decorated with wreaths-attached family portraits made by her mom. Her dad's office showcases paintings done by mother-and daughter.

"Our teacher is Nestor Villanueva, brother-in-law of painter-fiancée Lolo ance," Princess noted.

She hung her own oil paintings from her outdoor chilihood doodles to her latest works, in her bedroom.

THE PRINCESS (4)

A painting by Princess depicts a rustic scene.

PIECE BOOK pitcher from London

FORMAL living room boasts framed portraits and furniture pieces by Tony Ashtaro.

SITTING room was designed by her mom and brother with the help of Tony Ashtaro.

PRINCESS in Hollywood, Fraternal French tapestry hangs by the winding staircase.

ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Emerita Q. Velarde

Why Farrah wasn't in tribute

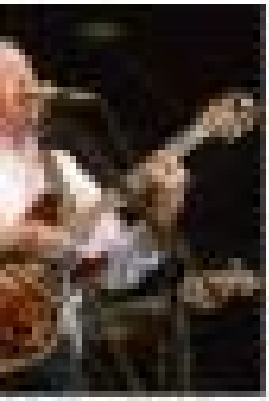
LOS ANGELES—The executive director of the film academy said Tuesday actress Farrah Fawcett wasn't included in the Academy Awards' In Memoriam segment because the actress was better known as a TV star. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences executive director Bruce Davis said he's not surprised some fans and family members are upset. ...AP

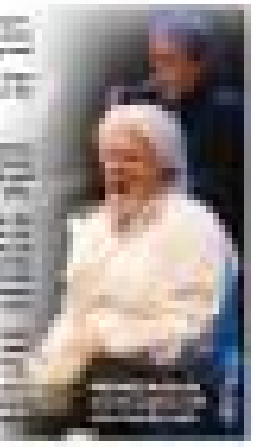
DID YOU KNOW...

'Pilipinas Got Talent': Viewer rates judges of latest reality talent show franchise on local TV / Page I4

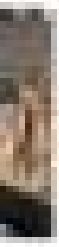
MOVIEWORLD

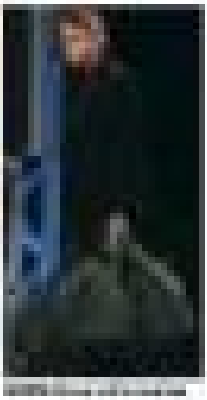
Soul, blues and a dash of jazz

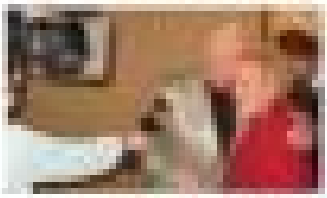




Cameron Chesney did not go home empty-handed from this one







Quiet 'personal' film earns 8 Urian nods

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

AFTER MAKING MOVIES FOR 11 YEARS, Erik Matti has finally done a film he can call his own.

He called it "The Arrival."

The first part was shot in Manila in 2007 and 2008—a four-day shoot. The remaining six days were shot during Holy Week of 2009 in Marcos, Ilocos Occidental, a small town 30 minutes away from Bacolod.

"I did it on my own pace," Matti said. He wrote the script after a 10-day improvisational workshop with his original cast. "I drafted the script's outline and had the entire improvise before I wrote the full screenplay."

"The Arrival" is about Leo, a skilled bookkeeper (Dwight Gaston) who runs away to Marcos, in search of a house and a reunion that he sees in his dreams.

So Jack would have it, Matti's first choice for the lead role, Gaston, was Ons from TV work by the time the camera started rolling.

"Leo is a difficult role. You need to know a person like Leo to be able to play him. Dwight is an intelligent actor, he's often cast in comedy, but he's an instinctive, honest actor as well," Matti pointed out.

Gaston is a singer and audio engineer, but not a stranger to acting. The two other main cast members, Jessica Sanchez and Dilleen Quezon, were Matti's hometown friends.

All the way

Matti did things his way all the way. Shunning the set for the movie in his home province of Ilocos Occidental, he cast his own mother, Juliena Matti, in a scene involving him. "She's good," he said. "I had a script ready for her, but her 77-year-old mind couldn't handle memory work so she improvised everything."

"The Arrival" is Matti at his most personal. "After years of wrecking in the main stream, I wanted to go off my back all premises of studio production, even a movie telling you to be efficient at the expense of creativity, telling you how to tell your story."

Even though he has made commercially viable films like "Scorpio Nights 2," "Pusakal" and "Exodus," Matti admitted that he's always been an "outsider" in the industry.

"We have said that my films have no heart just because I don't do a lot of crying scenes. I've been accused of not knowing how to tell a story because I avoid using words to move the plot forward," he noted. "After years of being told that ... 'Iba ito,' I said to myself, 'Let me do it my way.' I will do movies the way I want to see them as a member of the audience."

Private exercise

Precisely for that reason, he is reluctant to hold a commercial run of "The Arrival." He said, "I don't want to hinder viewers' minds as tickets and have them sit through a filmmaker's private exercise."

Thus far, "The Arrival" has been screened only at the Cinema Rehiyon of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and in the Bacolod area.

DWIGHT Gaston (top) plays a bookkeeper who escapes monotonously for the girl of his dreams, played by Amanda Cajili.

Erik Matti says it's about him, done at his own pace

Matti has sent screeners to festivals abroad, though. The movie has a screening scheduled in the Nantes' festival in Hong Kong later this month. It has also been invited to Italy next month. There's another screening in Bacolod in July, with proceeds going to the Negros Museum.

Honest, truthful

The filmmaker explained: "Since it's very personal, I initially showed it only to people close to me and, I thought, that's it—it's done as it is; it has served its purpose."

He got the surprise of his life when "The Arrival" was nominated for eight Urian awards. His mentor and friend Mario Quiambao ("Hospital Drive" are two of the nominees) "exposed" films that figure prominently in this year's Urian, given by the filmmaker organization Pelikulang Pilipino.

Matti is nominated for Best Film, Director and Screenplay; Gaston for Actor and Amanda and Dawson for Supporting Actor.

"Dr. Mike Bagaion (Urian member and Cinema Rehiyon organizer) sent me [nominee] and asked for a review copy," Matti related. "I'm happy that they liked it. Just happier for the recognition given to the actors, whose work as a whole is honest and realistic."

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AFP MANILA TEN officers on March 6. One-year-band Reynaldo Bacaoanta, 4-year-old Gabrielle Ramos, Jord Aragon a.k.a. BH, and 21-year-old Alexis Carpena.

A taste of how brutal the biz is

By Jaime Gallegos Ramirez
Contributor

ARE CITY'S "FILIPINO GOT TALENT" is the latest reality show franchise to unleash Pinoyness forever. Followed after "Britain's Got Talent"—Simon-Cowell-judge Susan Boyle's rise to stardom—it is a nationwide open audition for all those eager to show their gifts to the world and, maybe, find fame and fortune.

But unlike in the original show, of the judges in the local version, only Freddie Garcia is a bona fide showbiz from-to, what the former ABS-CBN president and CEO very nice always helpful, sometimes he merely adds fuel to the fire of rationale, of the contestants' egocism.

The other two judges, Ai Ai de las Alas and Jhong Aquino, are famous for their carefree, thunder-stealing brand of entertainment. Sure, they indulge in capricious criticism—and what does that achieve on the game of audition hunter? Perhaps give contestants a taste of how brutal the biz is.

In the March 6 episode, Patricia Gaerlan sang Shal Shai's "I Because Ba You" but failed to make a mark. She tried to exit gracefully, saying, "I appreciate this opportunity ..." To which Ai Ai retorted, "Ha, as."

The peanut gallery cackled.

Gaerlan's harrowing "Bahasa" sang Jessie Sicher's "Ons Time" and got the axe. Eric said she was wrong in initially introducing herself indeed. As Ai was heard: "Ano ka yan, walang kakwenta-kwenta. Bumalik ka sa pagkanta mo [go back to singing]."

Freddie added, "Tama si Ai ... Iba talent ka, kaya kapalit mo magaling."

Phillip Reynold Payot from Cagayan de Oro City is a rising star recently—but was told by Ai, "Mahiya ka kay Regine." Ai Ai was more direct. "Ili ka nalalaman."

Kent was Kapatagan, a band of 15- to 16-year-olds from Quezon. When they said they'd be doing their own composition, Freddie cautioned them before they even began. The young ones were undaunted and proceed him wining when the judges gave them love. "I promise you, makuha kayo kung hindi," Ai conceded.

Diane Manes Cortez sang some disco-era tune with Commodore-rocking inhumanness. After the performance, the judges said, "Off the floor!" The group answered like sound.

Theodora Barbie played her violin as if it were a guitar with his arms and worked the harmonica ... as he sang "Hand by Me." His incredible coordination was praised by the Ai Ai-singing-along, distracted from his (as well as the other contestants') free minutes of fame. Perhaps the show's director could "off the judges' mics during performances?"

Next was Regine Mercado Quiban, an odd combo of friends and birthdays. They went through to the point council. Said professional: "Bumalik ka sa pagkanta mo [go back to singing]